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THE TIMES

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FRIDAY DECEMBER 8 1995

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Valerie Grove talks to John Prescott

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Paris and Bonn outline federal plan

Europe heads for showdown on integration

By Roger Boyes in Baden-Baden and Philip Webster political editor

FRANCE and Germany yesterday put themselves on a collision course with Britain by setting out a joint programme for deeper European integration that envisages a common immigration policy, the extension of qualified majority voting and a far greater role for the European Parliament.

The key elements in the catalogue of reforms, outlined in an open letter to their European partners, are opposed by the British Government and will provoke outrage among the Euro-sceptics, adding to the growing tension in the run-up to next week's Madrid summit.

In the Commons John Major made it plain that Britain would oppose extension of qualified majority voting and "massive" new powers for the European Parliament at next year's inter-governmental conference.

Confirming that the Government was considering a White Paper on Britain's future relations with Europe he insisted that policies in those areas were "firm and will not change." But it seemed that President Chirac and Chancellor Kohl were determined to challenge Mr Major's bid to downgrade the importance of the conference.

The Chancellor used the two-nation summit in Baden-Baden to demonstrate solidarity with France. He said that Bonn would stand "shoulder to shoulder" with Paris in its attempts to meet the criteria for a single currency.

There was no escaping, however, the pall of crisis at the summit. The French Prime Minister, Alain Juppe, had to stay at home and the markets waited for signs of German support for the franc or any retreat from the strict entry criteria for European Monetary Union. No such signals emerged. The Germans, represented by their Foreign, Finance, Defence, Interior and Economics Ministers, seemed to realise for the first time that the French crisis is their own.

The joint letter of the two leaders, sent in the first instance to Felipe Gonzalez, the Prime Minister of Spain which holds the presidency of the European Union, concentrates on four areas of reform.

☐ The two countries urge the European Union to draw much closer to the West European Union. A common foreign and security policy should make a greater impact and be given appropriate instruments.

☐ They demanded a common approach to asylum and immigration. This should be accompanied by increased cooperation in the fight against terrorism and crime.

☐ Qualified majority voting should be extended to more areas. At the same time Europe should consider the use of votes weighted according to population size. The relationship between the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, should be made more simple. The nomination of Commissioners, the compensation and tasks of the Commision had also to be adjusted in order to accommodate new members.

☐ The "European Parliament, as well as national parliaments, have to be drawn more closely into the European integration process," said the letter.

All of these points appear to run counter to British policy and seem certain to provoke a row next week when the agenda for the IGC is discussed. And with Mr Major and other leaders expected to use the opportunity to throw fresh doubt on the timetable for a single currency, Madrid looks certain to be a fraught gatherings.

The two leaders were careful to stress that they were not aiming for an exclusive hard core Europe but they want all member states of an extended Union to have the same chance to take part in the European integration process.

In a direct challenge to Britain they said that "the temporary problems of a partner" in keeping up should not hinder other states who want to advance more quickly. The agreement resulting from the Maastricht follow-up conference should contain a clause allowing those willing and able to integrate more closely to go ahead.

The respective ministers for Europe, Michel Barnier and Werner Hoyer, accepted that there should be a secretary general personifying a common European foreign policy. Both ministers agreed that the secretary general could serve as secretary general of the West European Union.

The interior ministers agreed that Franco-German police units could operate behind each others' borders, providing some insurance against the movement of suspected terrorists or criminals. The French agreed to help in accelerating the legal establishment of Europol, Chancellor Kohl's cherished police network.

France appeared to give considerable ground, probably for tactical reasons. They made it clear that they would not be upset if new weighted voting arrangements gave Germany greater clout than France.

Chancellor Kohl, seemed to accept that there could not be a seamless Franco-German position before the conference since so much has still to be bargained for during the talks next year. He said: "We cannot

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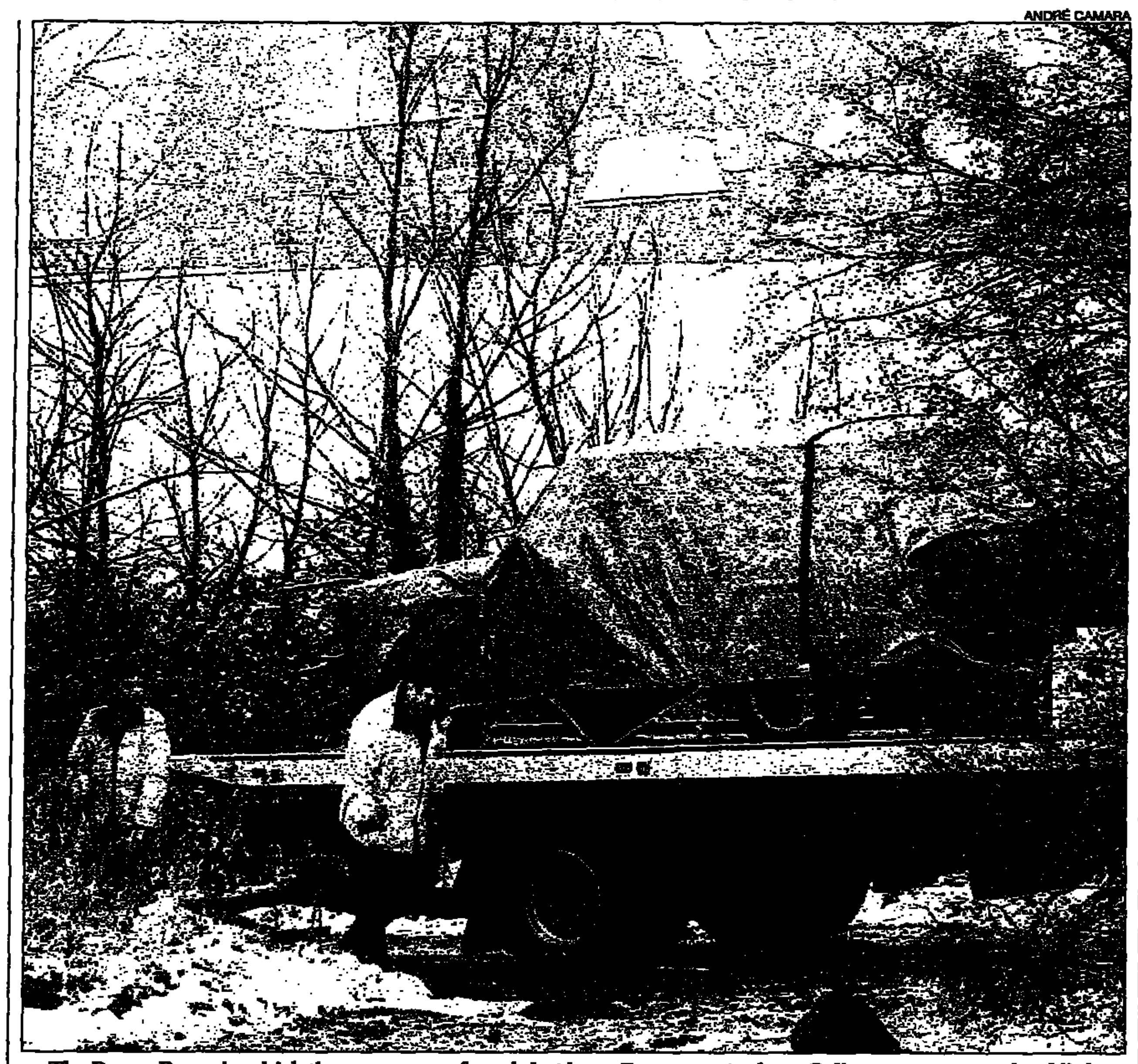
Nationality on licences

Britain has persuaded its European partners to allow the holder's nationality to be included in a new EU driving licence. The measure, which will be voluntary, enables Britain to keep the option of using licences as identity cards.

The inclusion of nationality on the back of the licence will require the consent of the holder. The new licence will come into force — in member states which choose to have it — from July next year.



ANDRÉ CAMARA

The Range Rover in which three men were found shot in an Essex country lane. Police suspect a gangland link

Three die in gangland shooting

By Stewart Tendler
crime correspondent

A GANGLAND hitman who lured three criminals to a rendezvous in a country lane and shot them as they sat in their car was being hunted by police last night.

The bodies were found slumped in their seats in a blue Range Rover by a farmer in a lane close to the A130 between Basildon and Chelmsford at Rettingdon in Essex. The farmer and a friend had driven down the frozen bridleway at dawn to feed pheasants when they discovered the bodies.

The victims, aged between 20 and 40, had each been shot in the head in what police describe as a classic gangland murder. One or possibly two shotguns were used in the killings but police are working on the theory that only a single gunman was involved.

The dead men were all criminals from an area between Southend, Basildon and Grays in south Essex. They were all dressed in jeans, jackets and pullovers. None was wearing a seatbelt and the lights of the car were off. They died some time between 6pm on Wednesday and just after 8am yesterday.

Mr Theobald and Mr Giggins found the bodies

The Range Rover was parked out of sight of the A130 in Workhouse Lane, often used by criminals as a dumping ground for stolen cars. The lane runs through land owned by Peter Theobald, a farmer.

Just after 8.30am he and Mr Ken Giggins, a family friend, drove down the lane to feed rearing pheasants. They found the Range Rover blocking a five-bar gate. Mr Giggins said he got out of his vehicle to investigate. He said: "I and went to tap on the window to ask them to move it. There was no response and I looked in and shouted back to Peter 'there are two people here. Looks like they are dead'."

The two men called the police on a mobile phone. Mr Giggins said: "Peter got out and he looked in and he said: 'There's another one in the back as well'."

Mr Giggins said the passenger in the front was lying forward and the driver had his head to one side. The passenger in the back had slumped over and was lying across the back seat. There was no blood on the windows.

Mr Theobald, who lives on Whitehouse Farm, a few hundred yards away, said he could see no clear tracks in the snow and he had heard nothing overnight. Detective Superintendent Ivan Dibley said all three were known to the police and they were "not on the bottom rung" of the criminal ladder. Mr Dibley said that a motive for the killings might become clear once police had identified the dead men.

Mr Dibley said: "Whoever has killed three men clearly is very dangerous and until such a time as we catch him I am concerned he is at large." He said the men had either been enticed to the lane, met there by arrangement or might have been forced there.

Governor dashes hopes of interest rate cut

By Arthur Leathley
and Anatole Kaletsky

HOPES of a pre-Christmas cut in interest rates receded last night as Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, said a reduction in the cost of borrowing could deepen economic uncertainty and damage overseas confidence in Britain.

Mr George seems ready for another showdown with Kenneth Clarke next week if the Chancellor decides to ignore the Bank's warnings and goes ahead with a cut that Tory MPs were led to expect after the Budget. Lenders unilaterally reduced mortgage rates by 0.25 per cent last week.

Mr George last clashed with Mr Clarke in May when he tried to push up base rates by a further half a point from the present 6.75 per cent. He was over-ruled by the Chancellor.

Speaking yesterday to the Commons Treasury Committee, Mr George was unrepentant. He said Mr Clarke's decision had turned out to be "very fortunate", but added: "If you consistently take a risk, you will pay a cost."

The Governor said a reduction in rates now could harm attempts to keep inflation below 2.5 per cent. Mr George also cast doubts on the Treasury's forecast of 3 per cent economic growth next year.

Mr George's gloomy assessment sparked nervousness. In the City, it led to a sharp fall in prices and did nothing to steady the faltering pound.

After last week's Budget failed to satisfy hopes of a big income tax reduction, ministers were swift to point to the prospect of early interest-rate cuts. A senior backbencher said: "We swallowed a 1p income tax cut on the basis that interest rates would drop too. Kenneth Clarke can't go back on the deal."

Sales surge, page 23

French strikes hit Eurostar trains

The Eurostar rail service between London and Paris was halted yesterday as a result of the French strikes. The service had held out for two weeks but strikers occupying a signal box at the Calais-Fréthun station told SNCF, the French state railway, that they would not allow any more after yesterday's 8.10 am from Paris. Le Shuttle services are running normally.

Union pressure, page 13

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Princess's 'political' plea angers Tories

By Alan Hamilton and Nicholas Wood

THE Princess of Wales sailed close to the political wind yesterday when she spoke in support of homeless young people whose life is about to be made harsher by planned cuts in their social security payments.

Addressing the annual general meeting of Centrepoint, the charity of which she has been patron since 1992 and which provides shelter for young people sleeping rough in London, the Princess shared a platform with Jack Straw MP, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, who has become an ardent campaigner against the streets of urban Britain being nightly filled with those who have no bed to go to.

As Tory MPs accused her of compromising the monarchy's political neutrality, John Major was forced to defend his record on the homeless. Conservatives said that the Princess had wrecked her hopes of being given a formal role as a goodwill ambassador and being accorded a higher profile on the world stage.

Although she avoided making an overtly partisan address at the Savoy Theatre in London, the Princess delivered to her audience of 200 charity and social services workers an emotive appeal on behalf of the disadvantaged young. Estimates of the number of single homeless people in London alone vary around 100,000. She said she was appalled at the dangers young people, especially 16 17-year-olds, faced on the streets, and how vulnerable they were to exploitation. "At a time when resources are stretched as never before, those needing help are becoming younger and more vulnerable. She

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SATURDAY IN THE TIMES

Frances Bissell's fast, low-fat Christmas

What Santa should bring the young investor

Times critics chose the year's best records and videos

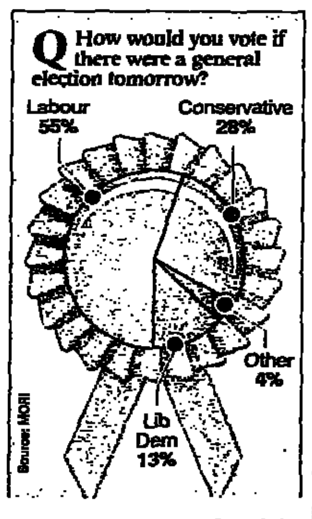
Poll offers glimmer of Tory hope

By Peter Riddell

THE Budget has helped to boost Tory support from recent low levels among key groups of voters, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

The poll, undertaken last weekend, is the fullest survey since the Budget. It suggests that, while the public remains very hostile to the Government's overall economic strategy and prefers Labour's approach, more people think that last week's measures will be good for them personally than at any time since the pre-election Budget of March 1992. Although they are still outnumbered by those believing the Budget will be bad for them, the net balance of good less bad of minus 22 points compares with minus 52 points a year ago.

Tory support has risen by two points to 28 per cent since the last MORI poll a fortnight ago, with Labour down one point to 55 per cent, and the Liberal Democrats also slipping one point to 13 per cent.



The main shifts in Tory support have been among 18-to-34 year olds, skilled workers and those in the South.

Nonetheless, the overall verdict on the Budget remains heavily negative.

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Remember please, Tony Banks is for life, not just for Christmas

MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Who would be Prime Minister? One afternoon you are jetting around the world, talking to foreign leaders. The next you are telling the Commons that a puppy is for life, not just for Christmas.

Yes, really. Yesterday, Tony Banks (Lab, Newham NW) asked John Major to remind Santa that a pet was not a festive gift, but an all-year-round commitment.

Mr Major looked bemused. Michael Heseltine stared at his shoes. Major had sold him a pup only last June — the office of Deputy Prime Minister. He was still feeling sore.

Banks looked smug. His majority is in almost five figures and this MP is not just for Christmas. He yaps at the Tories, nips his own leader's calves, and embarrasses the Chair with his language. Banks leaves little messes all of his own on the Commons carpet. Tony Blair must often have been tempted to bundle Banks into the boot and abandon him on the hard shoulder of the M1. Perhaps at the next election the voters of Newham North West should have handed to them with their voting slips a leaflet warning, *"Remember, Tony Banks is for life, not just for Christmas"*.

But how was the PM to respond? All he could do was repeat, po-faced, RSPCA advice to would-be pet-owners.

It is a novel way of using the premier: as a mouthpiece for important public service announcements. We wondered what other festive advice Mr Major might be asked to offer. "Clunk-click, every trip," perhaps, or "If you're on your bike, wear white!" Now the nights have closed in, should not the Prime Minister be primed to warn grannies not to open the door to men claiming to be from the gas board?

Nor do the possibilities stop there. During the thoughtful bits in his speeches, Major often adopts an engaging Mystic Meg tone: so he might consider ending each PM's Questions with a multi-secular thought for the day: "Remember, tomorrow is the first day of the rest of your life!"

After his pronouncements on responsible pet-ownership, John Major sat down, looking philosophical. His reverie on animal rights was disturbed by a query about mere human rights and the European Court. But David Atkinson (C), hot-foot from his constituency of Bournemouth E, brought the Prime Minister hard up against the Big Issues with the grim news that as the millennium approaches, legions of the nation's computers "will fail because they are not programmed to recognise the double zero in 2,000".

Apparently they are panicking in the palm courts. Mr Major, switching from his Mystic Meg voice to his computer-hacker's voice, and switching in his mind from abandoned puppies to crashing laptops, found this "a very helpful intervention".

To whom? It is, we suppose, conceivable that an intending puppy-purchaser might reconsider his gift in light of the PM's advice on dog-ownership. But does hysteria grip the nation's IT technicians today as they ponder that missing 00 to which Mr Major yesterday alerted them? And it got worse. Within minutes, responding to Hugh Bayley (Lab, York), poor Mr Major found himself obliged to declare, like some demented nutritionist, "Beef is a safe and wholesome product!" He forgot to remind us to floss our teeth. There was no evidence, he added, that mad cow disease infected humans.

"Look among your own Cabinet!" yelled Tony Banks. It was a cold day but Madam Speaker's expression suggested it might be time to put this puppy out.

Bridgewater Four threaten Howard with legal challenge

By Richard Ford
HOME CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL HOWARD last night announced his preliminary decision not to send the Carl Bridgewater murder case back to the Court of Appeal for a second review.

But the Home Secretary has given the three surviving men convicted of the killing in 1979 an opportunity to respond to his "provisional conclusions".

The Home Office said Mr Howard had completed his main consideration of the representations of wrongful conviction in the cases of Michael and Vincent Hickey, James Robinson and Patrick Molloy, now dead, and the results of the inquiries carried out at his request by Merseyside Police.

"He has not decided whether to refer the case to the Court of Appeal, although at present he is minded not to do so," the Home Office said in a statement.

It also disclosed that Mr Howard had received confidential information from two people which might implicate Vincent Hickey and Molloy. The information had been supplied on the basis that their identities would not be disclosed.

Bridgewater: shot during burglary

Jim Nichol, solicitor for the men jailed for killing the 13-year-old newspaper boy, said he would seek a judicial review of the decision. "This is a quite outrageous decision," he said. "Michael Howard is taking on the functions of the court." I believe he is so hopelessly wrong not to refer the case back that I will take the matter to the Divisional Court, which has the power to send it back without further reference to him."

Michael Hickey, now 33, his cousin Vincent, 41, and Robinson, 62, have protested their innocence since their conviction. Carl was shot dead during a burglary at a farm near Stourbridge, West Midlands. Molloy, who was convicted of manslaughter, died in prison in 1981. He claimed that he had been forced to make a confession which was crucial to the convictions.

Mr Nichol spoke to the three prisoners immediately after being informed of the Home Secretary's decision. He said Michael Hickey, who is in Gartree jail, Leicestershire, had reacted with defiance, declaring: "We're fighting on Jim, we're fighting on." But there had been disappointment from Vincent Hickey, in Long Lartin jail, Hereford and Worcester, and Robinson in Whitemoor jail, Cambridgeshire. "They were pretty down," he said.

Ann Whelan, mother of Michael Hickey, said: "We won't give up."

The case was referred back to the Court of Appeal by the then Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, in 1987. The hearing started the following year and the court dismissed the appeal in March 1989.

A further request for another referral was rejected by Kenneth Clarke while Home Secretary in February 1993. Mr Clarke said he had no doubts that the convictions were safe. But his refusal to publish the evidence on which his decision was based was held to be unjust in November last year by the Divisional Court, and the material was later passed to Mr Nichol.

The Home Office statement included an analysis of the issues considered by the Home Secretary. It said suggestions that some interviews with suspects were not recorded derived "from inaccurate record-keeping" and that Merseyside Police's inquiries had not established widespread breaches of rules on police questioning at the time.

The statement added that the police investigation had found no reason to believe that a detective who had interviewed Molloy had behaved in an oppressive manner. "There is no evidence in this officer's record of violent conduct: his two disciplinary convictions in a subsequent case were for falsifying evidence."

The statement concluded: "In relation to all four convicted men, allegations that responsibility for the murder lay elsewhere appear to bear no weight."

Campaign whose time is not come

THE Carl Bridgewater case is one of the causes célèbres that have punctuated the criminal justice system since the mid-Seventies (Richard Ford writes).

Supporters have been buoyed since the day Gerry Conlon walked from the Old Bailey alongside other members of the Guildford Four and shouted: "I am an innocent man."

Since then a procession of successful applicants has been freed on appeal, seriously undermining faith in the British judicial system. The Birmingham Six, Judith Ward, Stefan Kiszkow, the Broadwater Farm Three and the Maguire Seven have emerged to tearful reunions and compensation.

The Bridgewater Four campaign has always believed that after at least six inquiries into the case, it was only a matter of time before they too were cleared.

They have pointed out that there was never any forensic evidence linking the four men to Yew Tree Farm, there was no fingerprint evidence, nor identification evidence, and the murder weapon was not found. Nor were antiques stolen in the raid on the farm near Stourbridge, in the West Midlands, on September 19, 1978, ever found.

Carl Bridgewater, 13, died after being shot in the head with a sawn-off shotgun when he went to the farm and interrupted a burglary in 1978.

Michael Hickey, 17 at the time, was ordered to be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure. His cousin, Vincent, and James Robinson were jailed for life for the murder, with a recommendation that they serve 25 years each. Patrick Molloy, who was convicted of manslaughter, died in prison in 1981.

The strongest prosecution evidence at the trial was a signed confession by Molloy that he had been at the farm with Hickey and Robinson when the boy was shot.

ALISON McDOUGALL

The Princess: Those needing help are becoming younger

Princess's 'political' plea angers Tory MPs

Continued from page 1

added: "Every young person deserves a proper start in life and those who have no family to turn to need to be able to rely on us as a society for the help and encouragement they need. We, as part of society, must ensure that young people are given the chance they deserve."

Her intervention caused uproar at Westminster, where Downing Street officials distanced the Prime Minister from her remarks, saying that she had not contacted him about her speech. In a mark of the thinly suppressed ministerial anger over the affair, John Bowis, the minister responsible for children and social services, said: "I hope that the Princess will come and see some of the good work being done to support vulnerable young people as a result of a partnership between the Government, local government and voluntary organisations."

Tory backbenchers were less restrained. Sir Patrick Cormack said: "We now have the Princess, who is a rather headstrong and wilful young lady, on a platform in a pre-election period on a highly contentious subject with a highly partisan politician."

John Marshall, Tory MP for Hendon South, said: "It seems to me she wants all the benefits of that go with being a member of the Royal Family without accepting the discretion that goes with the benefits."

Franco-German summit agrees integration plan

Continued from page 1

and should not decide everything now." The two countries wanted merely to "demonstrate a common engagement for European unity and make our partners aware of the basic conditions underpinning the 1996 government conference".

There was talk of how to ensure that smaller European countries did not feel excluded from the integration process. France also went some way towards appeasing the Germans and the Scandinavians by announcing ahead of the summit that it intended to end its nuclear tests in February.

In the Commons Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said that the IGC must have a "realistic, practical agenda" to deliver steps to make Europe more relevant to its people, and to make it work better.

Some people may ask why another conference was being held so soon after implementation of the Maastricht treaty, said Mr Rifkind. "If it heralds a long period of navel-gazing and institutional tinkering, people will feel the EU is fiddling while Europe burns."

He also outlined Britain's doubts over the pace of monetary union. "It's clear that if EMU is to go ahead on January 1, 1999, only a minority of member states will be ready."

The implications of this had yet to be examined. "What we will be arguing very strongly is that whether it's because of an inability to join the EMU, or unwillingness, it is quite clear that almost certainly more than half the member states will not be part of a Single Currency if it was to be formed in 1999."

Mr Major also made it plain that the Cabinet's position on s single currency, neither ruling it in nor out, still stands.

■ The European Commissioner for monetary affairs, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, said yesterday that the Commission would propose both a "stability pact" for financial discipline inside a monetary union and a new version of the exchange rate mechanism for countries which stay outside. But he said that any arrangements for non-single currency states would be voluntary.

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Leading article, page 19

NEWS IN BRIEF

Meningitis claims two more children

Two more children have died of meningitis, it has been revealed. A four-year-old boy from Coventry died of presumed meningococcal meningitis on Wednesday, only hours after being admitted to hospital.

It was disclosed yesterday that Ashleigh Halsall, also four, died of meningitis in October, four days after doctors discharged her from hospital. The girl, from Bootle, Liverpool, died from pneumococcal meningitis after being readmitted to the hospital suffering from fits. Sharon Halsall, 23, her mother, is considering suing Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool, after doctors failed to diagnose her daughter's condition when first admitted.

In Manchester, researchers told an immunisation conference that a vaccine to combat the most deadly strain of the disease would not be available for at least five years.

Rail sales opposed

Campaigners against rail privatisation applied in the High Court for a judicial review of passenger franchising, days before the Government is due to announce winners of the first three franchises to be sold, Great Western, South West Trains and LTS Rail. Save Our Railways, an umbrella group, said the requirements for private operators were unlawful because they did not meet Government instructions that they should be based on the BR timetable.

Fish stocks in danger

About half of Britain's fish stocks, including populations of cod and plaice, are close to economic extinction, Tony Baldry, the Fisheries Minister, said yesterday. He called on trawlermen to back an intiative aimed at testing new nets designed to allow immature fish to escape and studies into more closed areas from which boats would be banned. Mr Baldry also warned fishermen that more boats would have to go, under the European common fisheries policy.

Deportation delayed

Ade Onibiyo, 19, a Nigerian visitor to Britain since 1987 who was to have been deported yesterday, has until next Thursday to seek a judicial review of his expulsion order. His father Abdul, 53, was deported to Lagos in October and, it is said, has not contacted his wife and five children since. Ann Widdecombe, a junior Home Office Minister, said: "We have no evidence that his father has come to grief. We have to consider each case on its merits."

Police 'leaks' inquiry

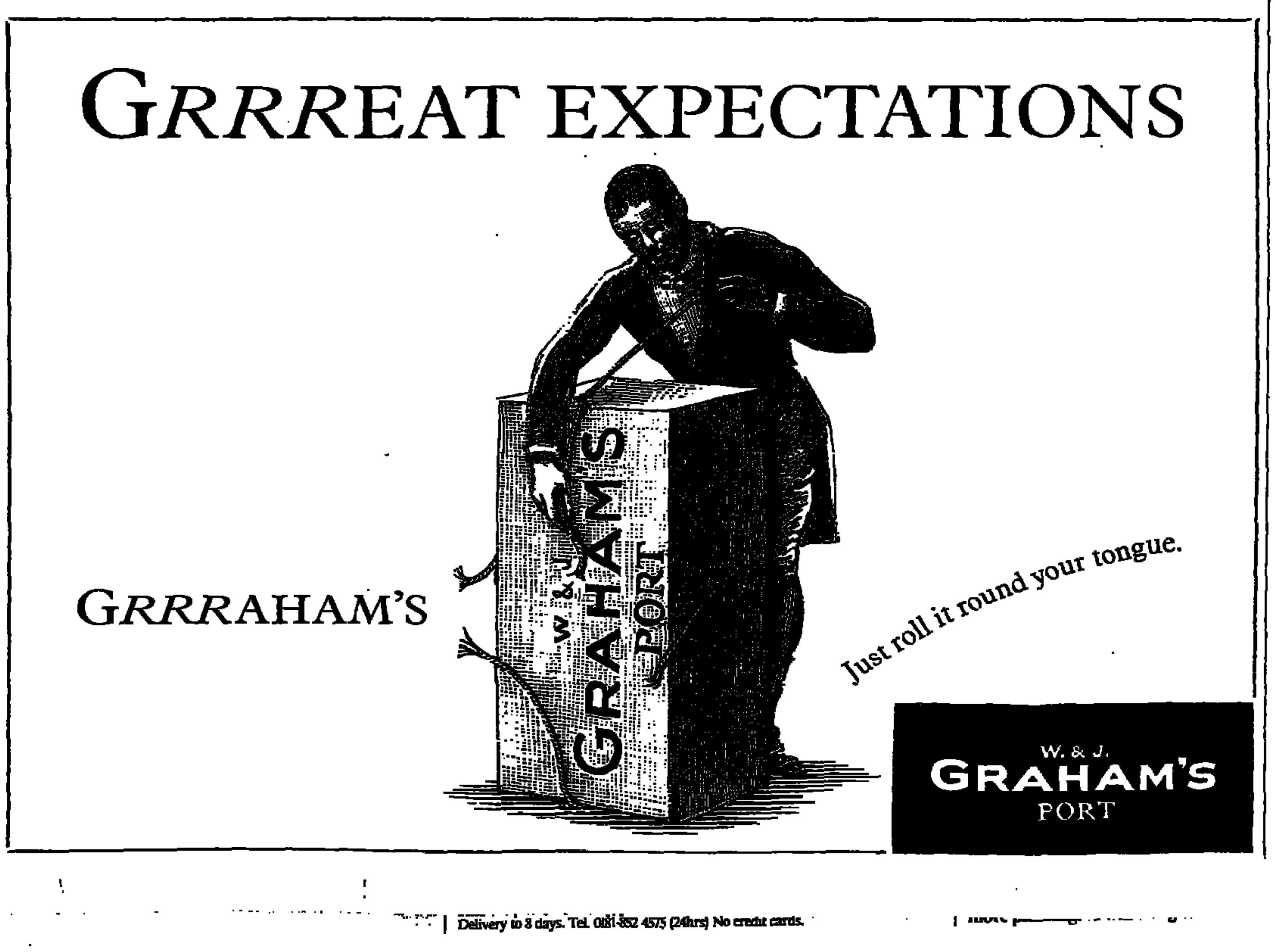
An inquiry has been launched into allegations that sensitive information relating to drug gangs has been leaked from the National Criminal Intelligence Service to top criminals. It is suspected that the leaks could have compromised the work of the service, whose aim is to target Britain's top 200 criminals, and the police forces assisting it. John Stevens, Chief Constable of Northumbria, who took over the Ulster shoot-to-kill investigation, will head the inquiry.

Girl's ovary saved

A two-year-old girl treated for kidney cancer had half an ovary removed and frozen so she can become a mother in the future. Harriet Selka, from Huddersfield, risked becoming infertile because of strong radiation treatment. The ovarian tissue removed at St James's Hospital, Leeds, can be replaced after puberty. Harriet's mother Elizabeth told BBC TV's *Look North* that her daughter's health was her priority but she wanted Harriet to be able to have children.

Award for Times writer

Stephen Anderton, the *Times* gardener, has won the 1995 Garden Writers' Guild Consumer Press Award for the best article of interest to committed gardeners. "A year of colour under the magnolia" was published on June 3. A pen and certificate were presented at a lunch in London.



'Dirty tricks' row over speech that never was

By Frances Gibb, legal correspondent

THE Lord Chancellor stepped into the dispute between the executive and the judges last night and publicly rebutted a newspaper report that he was going to "warn" the judges not to overstep their powers.

In an unprecedented move, Lord Mackay of Clashfern said: "I could never warn the judiciary not to overstep their powers by using judicial review to challenge ministerial decisions."

Making his first public comments on the current tensions between Government and the judges, Lord Mackay said the independence of judges "is something . . . the Lord Chancellor nor any other member of the Government would ever seek to challenge."

But Lord Mackay's strong and robust rebuttal — in a letter to Charles Moore, Editor of *The Daily Telegraph* over a front-page story in the paper — aroused immediate speculation over the story's origins. Sources at Westminster insisted it originated from the Press Office at Conservative Central Office — the second such leak in a week. On Monday night, the office leaked information about an asylym seeker's attempt to stay in Britain. Yesterday's *Telegraph* story, written by its political editor, quoted from the text of what seemed to be a leaked copy of a speech due, the newspaper said, to be given by the Lord Chancellor last night at Guildhall.

Although no such speech was planned for Thursday night, Lord Mackay said yesterday: "I did speak there on Wednesday evening. I did not speak about the position of the judiciary. I was asked to propose the toast of the Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs and the Corporation of London."

His department also confirmed that Lord Mackay had been planning a longer speech on Wednesday night which he was then told was "neither expected nor appropriate". In the latest show of what was seen by Labour as "dirty tricks" from Tory central office, the *Telegraph* is understood to have seen extracts of a draft speech which would probably have formed the basis of any longer address.

The draft had not been given the Lord Chancellor's final seal of approval. But it would have been been circulated in advance to other Government ministers and could easily have gone from one of them to Central Office.

The extracts quoted in the "leak" reflect the Government's concerns over the judiciary after a series of rulings against ministers. There is also tension over the Home Secretary's "tougher sentencing" proposals. Last week the former Master of the Rolls, Lord Donaldson of Lymington, spoke of an unprecedented campaign against judges by politicians and an "unpardonable" campaign of "abuse and criticism" which was a "prelude to secure parliamentary authority" for Michael Howard's proposals.

Yesterday Lord Mackay, who holds a unique constitutional position in being both a senior Cabinet member and head of the judiciary, made clear he had no intention of telling the judges what to do. His letter said that judges must "act and must be allowed to continue to act independently — of Parliament, of the Government, of the Lord Chancellor and of each other".

He strongly affirmed the ultimate sovereignty of Parliament to make law.

Leading article, page 19

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'I was glad when he admitted he was homosexual, there was nothing wrong with me'

MP Ashby told wife 'I can have what I want now'

By A Staff Reporter

DAVID ASHBY told his wife that he could "have whatever he wanted" once he was elected to Parliament, she told the High Court yesterday.

Silvana Ashby, 52, speaking softly in a thick Italian accent, said she and her husband were very excited when he was first elected as MP for North West Leicestershire in 1983.

"He showed me around the House of Commons and we had tea. Then coming back down the Embankment, he said 'remember Silvana, from now on for you I am dead, I don't exist for you any more. I will dedicate myself to my work. Don't count on me. I can have whatever I want now'.

"I found that very strange," she told Mr Justice Morland and the jury on the 12th day of her husband's libel action against *The Sunday Times* over allegations that he was homosexual. Mrs Ashby said she was very lonely in the early days of their marriage, when she spoke little English, and asked her husband to stay at home more. "He said he could not but he would buy me a dog instead. So he bought me a dog."

Her husband listened impassively as she said he was not interested in sex and described the physical side of their marriage as "not very satisfactory". Fighting back tears she said: "I thought my husband didn't like me physically because he was trying to avoid me. I thought there was something wrong with me. I lost my confidence. I thought I was just a maid for him, not his wife."

Mrs Ashby said she was pleased when he admitted to her that he was homosexual as it meant there was nothing wrong with her. When he returned from a visit to America in September 1992, where he had visited his homosexual brother Brian and his partner, Mr Ashby told her he couldn't stand to stay with her any more. "He hated me. He was just terrible. I couldn't understand why. I tried to put my hand out to him, but he said 'don't touch me, don't touch me again'."

When he told her that October that he would be moving out when his new flat was ready, she insisted he tell her why. "He said 'I have got to tell you something. I have changed.' He started to cry." When she asked him what he meant, he said: "I had an encounter many years ago. Then I put it out of my mind and now I can't."

She said she also started to cry, put her arms round him and asked him what she could do. "I said 'if you have changed once, you can change

Ashby: denies having homosexual affair

again' but he said 'it's not as easy as that'." Mrs Ashby said: "I was in no doubt that he was telling me he was homosexual." She added: "In a way I was pleased, because I knew there was nothing wrong with me. I had thought for years that I was a terrible person and that that was why he didn't like me."

She denied she had used words like "poof" or "poofter" to her husband. After their conversation, he told her to prepare some lunch because he had to get ready for work. "While the food was cooking, he went upstairs to change. I sat halfway up the stairs and started to cry. He put his hand on my shoulder and said 'Silvana, don't cry. I am not worth it'. Of course, at that I cried more."

Mr Ashby is claiming damages over allegations that he shared a double bed with a man friend during a holiday in Goa at the end of 1993. Times Newspapers Ltd and Andrew Neil, the former *Sunday Times* Editor, deny libel. They accept that Mr Ashby did not holiday with a man in Goa, but assert that he was, and is, having an affair with 32-year-old Dr Ciaran Kilduff.

Mrs Ashby, who still lives in the marital home in Putney, southwest London, said she met Mr Ashby in February 1964 when she was on a skiing holiday and although they could only communicate in French, it was love at first sight.

He proposed at the end of that summer when she was visiting England and they married the following September. Their only child, Alexandra, was born three years later. When they married, Mr Ashby was building a career at the Bar and would spend his weekends playing rugby. She concentrated on bringing up their daughter and decorating their home.

She was welcoming but selective about his friends, as she had none of her own, but drew the line when he used to leave the key under the mat when they lived in Chelsea and she would come home to find the house full of people she didn't know.

Politics was "very dominant" in his life and she accompanied him though the selection procedures as he fulfilled his ambition to be an MP. Once he was elected, she worked for him as his secretary. She described an incident in the early years when he embarrassed her by sending her to the butcher's with a written request for one of his favourite dishes — "pig's arse in cabbage".

She denied being intensely jealous of her husband. "That was absolutely not true. Because I knew my husband didn't like me I was much happier when I was in Italy than here as I had nobody here. I tried as often as I could to go to Italy because at least I could be myself there and have a chat. I was very aware of being a foreigner. To start with, England is not a very welcoming country and I was very, very unhappy. I was going to Italy, leaving him on his own. If I was a very jealous person I wouldn't have done so." She said she always had her suitcase ready.

She said they did have good times, however. They both enjoyed opera, history, holidays and the same type of food. "And I loved my husband very, very much."

Asked if she showed him affection, she replied: "I'm a very open person. I would put my arm around him. His reaction was a bit cold because this was England.

"I had the impression English people behaved like that so I just put up with it." She went on: "To start with, he was just showing indifference to me, and then he became more aggressive towards me. He was actually, verbally, very often and sometimes physically abusive. If I reacted, I reacted because he started it."

The fights became frequent from 1988 onwards through the Nineties. She said that on one occasion, during an argument, he took a pillow and put it on her face, keeping it there for quite a while. At this time, she added, he was always very cross and very angry.

"He tried to avoid me most of the time. Very often, I would say 'please David, sit down and talk to me'. He would say 'I have no time'. He would leave the house and slam the door. Occasionally, he would say 'make an appointment, if you want to talk to me, come and see me in my office'. I don't know if it was a joke."

Mrs Ashby said she became suspicious when her husband kept a young man called Tim as his parliamentary research assistant even though Tim was at university. She denied being a suspicious, jealous person and said she never looked through her husband's letters or luggage. "I trusted him," she said. "If you love someone, you trust them. I love David more than my life. I sincerely do." At this point in her evidence, her 55-year-old husband left the courtroom.

She said she was very much against his becoming a member of Lloyd's because he wanted to put their home up as a guarantee. In the end she was forced to agree. She had no sympathy with him when he said he had lost money — "he might have said £30,000".

In May 1993, her husband saw a psychiatrist and afterwards seemed much happier. "I opened my heart to him. I even cried. I was getting more confident, hoping it might have solved things between us. He said that whatever happened I was never to suffer." Later, she said, he put his hand on her shoulder and said "Silvana, don't cry. I am not worth it."

On October 19 that year, he told her he was leaving when his flat was ready. "He said he couldn't live with me any more.

"I said we loved each other and nothing else mattered very much. But he said he was going. I said he had changed. I meant that he liked the company of men more than mine and more than other women."

She admitted leaving rude messages on Dr Kilduff's answering machine, and writing a letter to him after finding lots of her husband's dirty socks in the washroom after he left her. "I thought this was just a game. If he goes and leaves me lots of socks, it is just as well that Kilduff washes them.

"I took the socks round to Kilduff. I rang the bell and he tried to hide so I just put the socks in a plastic bag and the letter through the letter box." The hearing continues.

ADRIAN BROOKS

Silvana Ashby: her husband offered to buy her a dog because she was lonely

Thaw is bad news for queues of rail travellers

By Lin Jenkins and Jonathan Prynn

COMMUTERS thought they had heard every possible excuse for rail chaos until yesterday when Railtrack, struggling to explain why thousands of people had been left stranded on snowy platforms, came up with another explanation — the wrong kind of thaw.

Queues of shivering commuters stretched from railway stations into the streets of Kent, Sussex and Surrey as motorists heeded advice to leave their cars at home and rely on public transport.

Hundreds of commuter trains were cancelled and passengers faced delays of up to two hours during the morning and evening rush hours.

Lines into Waterloo, Charing Cross, London Bridge and Victoria were worst affected because their electricity supply comes from a third rail at the trackside, rather than overhead cables.

These rails had been de-iced overnight, allowing some early trains to reach their destination. But a slight thaw washed the de-icing chemicals off the rails and, in a cruel stroke of fate, the temperatures then fell back below zero. The rails froze again, preventing power being conducted to the trains.

"Had it got colder or snowed heavily it would have been fine," Railtrack said, "but it got warmer and rained, washing the de-icer off the rail. When it refroze the passenger trains could not get any power and they are not equipped to de-ice the third rail."

Passsengers could not even vent their spleen by telephoning the Rail Users' Consultative Committee in London as all of the staff were delayed, too. Passenger service operators are expected to lodge large claims for compensation from Railtrack.

Freezing fog is the latest peril for motorists. The Meteorological Office predicted patches in central and eastern England last night and said they would become more widespread tonight.

Forecast, page 22

Teenager is convicted of mugging

By Stephen Farrell

A TEENAGER was yesterday convicted of mugging the husband of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Barbara Mills.

Bernard Enerio, 17, took part in an attack by six youths in which Bernard Mills, a businessman, was stabbed with a 5in knife.

Mr Mills told the court how he was left "dripping" with blood from a severed artery after the attack outside his home in London on May 30.

Enerio, 17, wept after the jury at Inner London Crown Court found him guilty of unlawful wounding and robbery. The only youth to be charged, he admitted supplying the knife that was used.

Enerio, of South Norwood, south London, was cleared of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. He was remanded in custody for sentencing on December 21.

Mr Mills, 57, had told the court that he lost three pints of blood after the violent assault but at first did not even realise he had been stabbed. He had just parked his car outside his home in Regent's Park when the youths closed in on him.

In the 30 seconds that followed one of the youths tried to hold him in a headlock while others punched, kicked and hit him on the head with a truncheon. They then snatched his wallet containing £100 and credit cards.

Wardell denies marriage collapse

A HUSBAND denied yesterday that his marriage to a building society manageress had been collapsing just before she was found murdered. Gordon Wardell, who is accused of killing his wife and faking an attack by robbers, said they had been "getting the relationship back together again".

At Oxford Crown Court, Richard Wakerley, QC, for the prosecution, said that Carol Wardell had been "desperately unhappy" in the weeks leading up to her murder. Mr Wardell, 42, a warehouse manager, had recently lost the possibility of a directorship, which had been the "best chance of his life".

He faced losing his job and the prospect put a strain on his 12-year marriage, said Mr Wakerley.

Mr Wardell, of Meriden, West Midlands, denied his marriage was collapsing but admitted they had not had sex for about six months before she died. He blamed pressures of work.

Mr Wakerley alleged that Mr Wardell murdered his wife on the afternoon of September 11 last year. "On that Sunday, for a reason only you know, you killed her. You squeezed her throat then put your hand on her neck until her life was gone. Far from regretting it, you invented an elaborate scheme to hide it."

Mr Wakerley alleged that on that day, Mr Wardell washed gardening clothes that he had not worn for two weeks, and kept up a Sunday routine of buying two cornets from an ice-cream van.

Mr Wardell, 42, claimed he was drugged and left bound for 14 hours at his home by four robbers, while Carol, 39, was forced to open her branch of the Woolwich, letting the gang steal £14,000. Her body was found dumped in a lay-by next day near Nuneaton, Warwickshire.

Under cross-examination, Mr Wardell told the jury that he did not pass water that evening, despite having drunk nearly two pints of beer at a pub and a cup of tea with his supper. He said he did not go to the lavatory until he was released by the police the next day. The trial continues.

Carol Wardell: body was found in a lay-by

Delay for woman in baby case

From Quentin Letts in New York

A BRITISH woman accused of trying to carry her dead baby on to a transatlantic jet appeared in court yesterday for the twenty-second time in 14 months, only to have the case delayed until next year.

Caroline Beale, 32, a civil servant from Chingford, northeast London, slumped on hearing the news and later collapsed into the arms of a British Consul staff member.

Miss Beale was arrested in September last year after customs officers in New York became suspicious about a bundle under her sweater. They found a dead baby wrapped in a plastic bag.

She was held in prison, then released on £49,000 bail last May. Yesterday she appeared at Queen's criminal court, New York, to hear a psychiatrist's report based on 15 hours of interviews conducted in September but the court was told that the report was not ready. Judge Hanophy, presiding, was clearly angered by its unavailability. Miss Beale was told to return to the court on January 23.

The day before she tried to board the aircraft last year she had given birth in a New York hotel room without the knowledge of her boyfriend. Her parents have put up their London home as security for bail.

Landlord declares bed and breakfast war

HOLIDAYMAKERS visiting a bed and breakfast in a tranquil Wiltshire village cannot enjoy a pint at the local pub because the landlord will not serve them.

Publican Ido Davids turns away drinkers and diners if he finds out that they are staying at the rival bed and breakfast opposite his pub. Brian Hawes, owner of the guest house, has to warn visitors not to risk a trip across the road to the bar and restaurant.

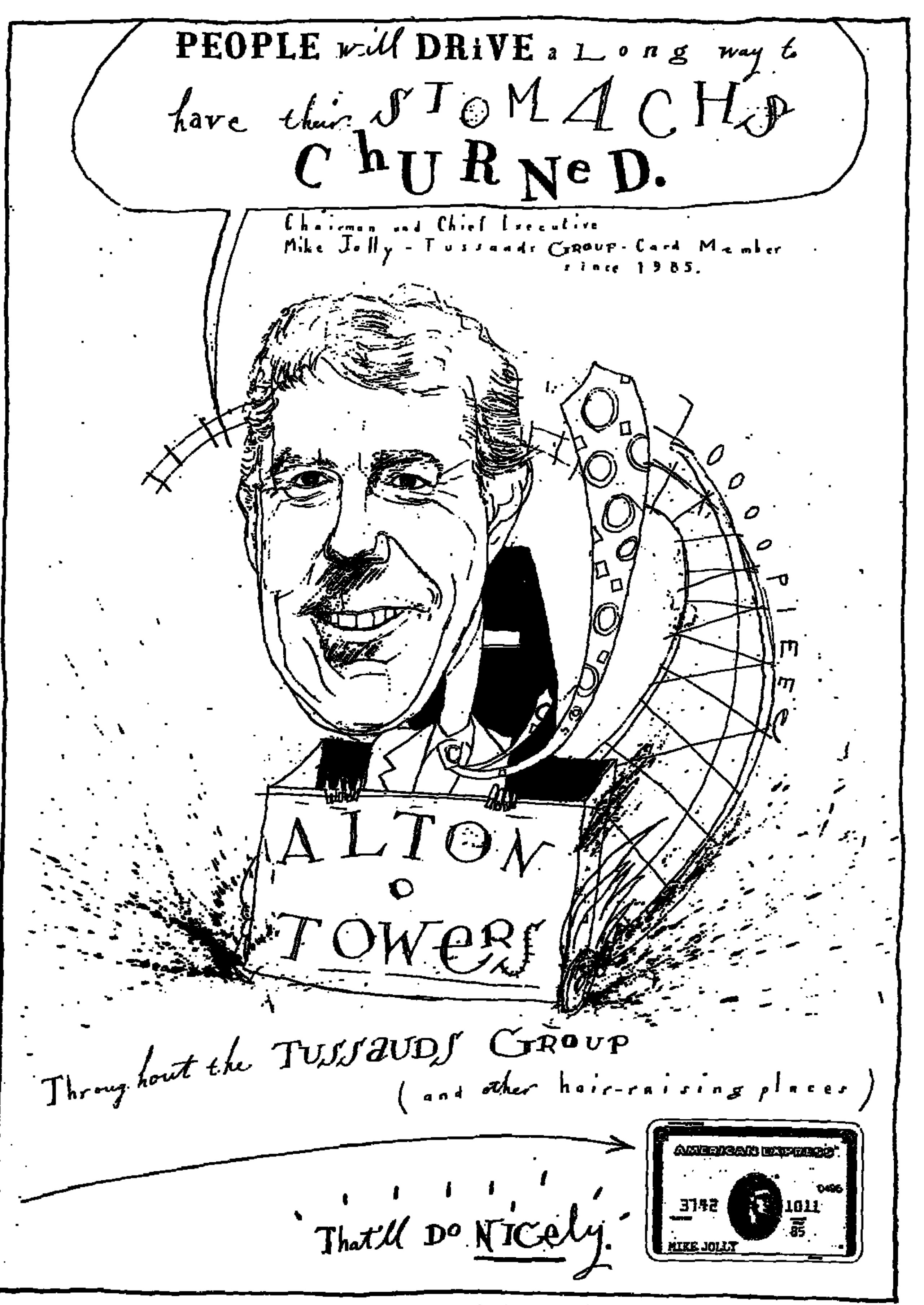
Mr Hawes, 54, offers to drive guests to neighbouring villages because there is nowhere else to eat or drink in Barford St Martin, near Salisbury. Mr Hawes, who runs the Briden House bed and breakfast, said: "It's very silly. You would think we could scratch each other's backs but he's actually turning away trade. We get a lot of overseas visitors and this gives a terrible impression about English hospitality. Many find it hard to believe. He stands outside his place to watch who's coming in and out of our doors."

Mr Davids, 29, the licensee, also offers accomodation at the Barford Inn but says he is the victim of unfair competition. He claims he has had to spend thousands of pounds to comply with fire regulations while the Briden House is exempt from the rules because it has fewer than four letting rooms.

Mr Davids charges £40 a night for a double room while guests opposite pay £30. He said: "I have to comply with the regulations otherwise I could lose my license. I also have to pay business rates whereas the Briden House only pays domestic council tax. It's very unfair. I decided to make the point by not serving people from the guest house. If they want to stay in a cheap place why should they use my facilities?

"If you were staying in a pub next door to a Hilton hotel you wouldn't expect to use the Hilton sauna. It's the same thing. I admit I'm losing money but I feel I'm fighting a just cause."

Anne Anderson said the publican challenged her as she enjoyed a drink with her husband and two young daughters. Mrs Anderson, from Ashford, Kent, was staying at Briden House on a family holiday when they decided to visit the pub. "The landlord asked where we were staying then said 'So you come over here drinking but you won't bloody stay in our rooms'. We finished our drinks quickly then left. The whole thing was unbelievable."



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Food firms and Prime Minister move to reassure public on BSE risk as ban spreads in schools

Shoppers' boycott undermined by 'hidden' beef

By Robin Young

FOOD manufacturers insisted yesterday that all of their beef products were safe, while admitting that beef was an ingredient in many products where it might not be expected.

A search of supermarket shelves revealed "hidden" beef in products as diverse as chicken soup, wine sauce, lamb stock cubes and children's jellies. Food safety campaigners announced yesterday that they are to research the extent of beef use in the nation's food.

Manufacturers accepted that shoppers would often have to read the ingredient list, in small print on the packaging, to determine whether beef was present in a product. There is no legislation requiring the amount of each item to be specified; ingredients are listed in diminishing order of use.

CPC, manufacturer of Bovril and Knorr products, agreed that beef was present, for example, in Knorr lamb stock cubes but was unwilling yesterday to disclose the precise amount. The company said that none of its products had ever contained any of the materials the Ministry of Agriculture has banned because of fears over bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

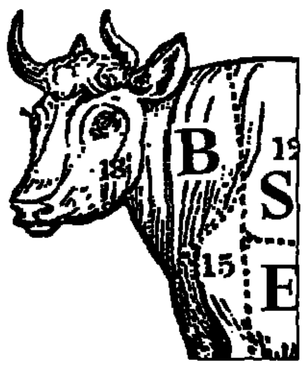
CPC is considering legal action against the BBC because of a warning against the use Bovril given on a Radio 2 helpline on BSE. The beef in Bovril products does not originate in Britain.

John Lisle, company secretary of Kerry Foods, whose products include Wall's sausages, Mattesson's meat products and supermarket brands of pies, said: "We believe it has to be a case of *caveat emptor*. If people want to avoid eating beef they will have to examine the ingredient lists."

Mr Lisle said that Kerry Foods bought meat in bulk. "It could come from anywhere, but we can trace each batch back to the supplier. The supplier should then be able to trace it back to his source.

"Our intention is to insist on the highest quality and hygiene. Every batch has to comply with all our requirements and is dissected in the warehouse by our quality assurance teams before it is used. We would ban the use of any meat the moment it was shown to give rise to any risk."

Duncan Bogie of Van den Bergh Foods, which produces Oxo products and Batchelor's soups, said: "There is beef in Chicken Oxo cubes, but all the beef we use in all our products is 100 per cent safe. We use a combination of beef extract from South America and beef bone stock from the United Kingdom. The processes we use achieve white-heat temperatures which ensure total sterilisation. All the bones we use are European Union approved."



Philip Mobsby, director of the British Meat Manufacturers' Association, said: "There is no reason to suppose that products containing beef are not completely safe. None of our members use proscribed offals, most of which have never been used in any case.

"We are producing in accordance with the Government's assurance that there is no risk, and we have no reason to doubt them. They are basing their view on very good evidence. We have to take it that what they say is honest and truthful." Geraldine O'Shea, spokeswoman for the Soup and Gravy Manufacturers' Association, said: "A lot of the beef used in soups and stock cubes is actually beef extract, which is a byproduct of the corned beef industry in South America, sold as a commodity on the world market. Where beef and bones are sourced from within the UK all our members have excluded skulls and vertebrae for a number of years."

McDonald's said beef for its burgers did come partly from the UK, but it was lean flank and forequarters meat. "We have never used any offal and we never will. We are totally satisfied our product is safe," a spokeswoman said.

Supermarkets have reported a drop in beef sales. The Co-op said demand had fallen by 2 per cent, while Sainsbury's reported "a noticeable decline". Marks & Spencer said sales were "more difficult".

David Lidgate, a leading London butcher, said: "Our own sales are not affected, because people come to us knowing we are careful about our meat. But it is really frightening to see this frenzy whipped up. What alarms me is that the dangers of stopping families eating beef may far outrun the dangers from BSE, which as far as anyone knows are in reality quite non-existent."

The study into beef use in food is to be conducted by the Food Commission, an independent research organisation based in London. Dr Tim Lobstein, of the commission, said yesterday: "We are going to send researchers into shops to prepare a list of the unexpected products in which beef is used. We shall also be trying to find out how old canned beef products like tinned stews may be. There is a real possibility that some which are still on sale may date from before the time the Government's controls to safeguard against BSE began."

STEVE FORREST

More schools have taken beef dishes off the menu, but food campaigners are worried about unseen ingredients

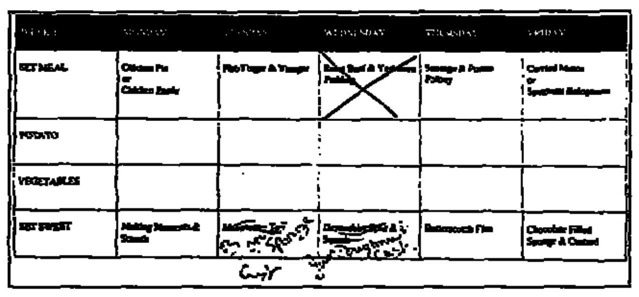
Councils bow to parental concerns

By Tim Jones
and Leyla Linton

EDUCATION authorities in England and Wales were planning urgent reviews of their food-buying policies last night as hundreds of schools took their own decisions to stop serving beef or to introduce restrictions.

In London, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities' education committee advised schools to ban certain beef products. Scores of councils in the capital bowed to pressure from parents by taking beef off menus.

Graham Lane, chairman of the association's education committee, said: "Frankly, people are not prepared just to accept government assurances at their face value. Local education authorities everywhere are being approached by parents who are concerned about the situation."


SET MEAL
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Beefless menu at Bethune Primary School in Hull

Kent County Council yesterday banned beef from the kitchens of Kent schools because of BSE fears. The catering contractors BET said it was contacting all its employees to make sure that replacement dishes were available from today.

Most county councils insisted beef was still safe to eat although many no longer serve pies, sausages, mince, hamburgers and other products that could contain offal or meat scraped off the bone. Alternative menus are usually provided in secondary schools for children who wished to avoid beef. Many primary schools, where often there is no choice, do not serve beef at all.

Most education authorities appear to have left decisions to individual head teachers, who allow parents to insist their children do not eat beef.

Only three of 38 counties contacted by *The Times* have refused so far to have any beef products whatever served in their schools.

Two of them, Humberside and Leicestershire, stopped ordering beef five years ago after the first BSE scare, while Cleveland introduced the same policy three years ago. Humberside had boycotted British beef and served imported meat until parents pressed for a total ban.

Oxfordshire County Council was one of the first to act yesterday when it said that until the situation had been resolved it would buy no more beef products for its 300 schools.

Cambridgeshire will decide to stop supplying beef on either a temporary or permanent basis. A spokesman said: "We are pressing the Government for definitive advice as there appears to be some confusion."

In Hertfordshire, about 50 schools no longer serve beef, in Suffolk 75, in Surrey 12, in Wiltshire 25, and in Staffordshire 150.

Dr Paul Gray, Devon's deputy education officer, has written to 500 head teachers saying the council has always excluded the use of beef products made from meat scraped off the bone.

For East Sussex schools, the policy is to buy only imported frozen beef and never to use offal or pies or beefburgers from outside caterers.

Gwynedd County Council, in common with many others, said it had no immediate plans to change its policy, having received assurances that the beef it buys comes from BSE-free herds.

Liverpool City Council said that it was satisfied with government assurances and had no plans to stop children eating beef.

Major insists safety is not in doubt

By Michael Hornsby
Agriculture Correspondent

THE Prime Minister came to the defence of the beleaguered meat industry yesterday, insisting the safety of beef was "not in question", while Labour MPs called for an urgent debate to allay "widespread public concern".

John Major told the Commons: "There is currently no scientific evidence that BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] can be transmitted to humans or that eating beef causes CJD [Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease]."

CJD is a rare fatal brain disease, which kills fewer than one in a million people a year worldwide. Some scientists fear BSE will lead to an increase in CJD deaths, but there is no conclusive evidence that that is happening.

Anne Taylor, shadow Leader of the House, said a debate was justified "because not all experts are as confident as the Prime Minister about health threats from eating beef."

Earlier Nigel Griffiths, Labour's consumer affairs spokesman, called on Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, and Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, to meet scientists who have questioned the safety of beef to review all the available facts. "This would end the hysteria and bring common sense to the debate," he said. "People are confused and they want to know whether they should be eating beef."

The Local Authority Catering Association, whose 700 members supply four million meals a day to schools in England and Wales, backed the call. It urged the Government to set up a panel of experts that included its own advisers and scientists such as Sir Bernard Tomlinson, an authority on brain disease who says he no longer eats burgers, meat pies or liver.

But Mr Hogg continued to insist yesterday that no one could come to any harm from eating British beef, and was supported by Mr Dorrell. Mr Hogg is satisfied that all the known facts are already in the open and that to set up a new inquiry would imply that he did not have full confidence in his own advisers.

Jim Watson, past president of the Livestock Auctioneers' Association, said cattle prices at Banbury market in Oxfordshire yesterday were down about £80 a head, or 12 per cent, because of the BSE scare.

Scare gives sales boost to organic farmers

By Robin Young

PRODUCERS of organic beef say their business has increased since concern over BSE spread. Their farms do not use chemical fertilisers, feed additives or antibiotics, and meet standards set by the Soil Association.

Yesterday the association said that there had been cases of BSE on some organic farms but "all those cases were in animals which had been bought in — there has never been a case of BSE in an animal which has been born and bred on an organic farm".

Organic meat is available in some supermarkets and high-quality butchers, but it accounts for only 0.1 per cent of the British meat market. Sales are worth little more than £1 million a year. The price is higher, 10 per cent or more on fillet steak and as much as 50 or 100 per cent on sausages and burgers. The producers include the Highgrove estate of the Prince of Wales.

One big producer, Tim Finney of Eastbrook Farm, at Bishopstone, Wiltshire, said: "Our sales of beef may be up by 10 to 12 per cent as a result of the BSE scare. People are asking a lot more questions about how beef is produced."

Producers of premium beef have also gained. Richard Guy of the Real Meat Company, distributing premium but not organic beef from Warminster, Wiltshire, said: "We have had a noticeable increase in custom. We never use beef calves derived from dairy herds. In the end, it is for the public to assess the risk of the meat they eat, and there is just not enough information."

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Major insists safety is not in doubt

More Britons head for life of ill-health in their final years

By Ian Murray

BRITONS are living longer but getting no healthier, according to a government survey. Although life expectancy is rising, they are "years with a disability, not extra years of healthy life", says the latest edition of *Population Trends* from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Better treatment of heart disease, for example, has meant fewer people dying early from it. But those who survive are not free from disability and will need special care longer. With an increasingly ageing population, this fact has big implications for the planning of health and social care by services and families.

Cancer and heart disease are the main killers, each responsible for a quarter of deaths. A further one in eight dies from cerebrovascular disease, mainly strokes. Death from cancer has decreased slightly among men, largely because fewer have lung cancer. The number of women dying of cancer has increased a little, especially among those with lung cancer — evidence that women are not giving up smoking at the same rate as are men.

Smoking is increasing among teenagers. By the age of 16 almost 30 per cent of teenagers are smokers and there is no evident downward trend. Girls are slightly more likely to be smokers than boys.

Children are getting taller and fatter but taking less exercise. Their intake of fruit and vegetables is lower and their fat intake higher than medically recommended. The proportion of breast-fed babies has grown from about half in 1975 to two thirds.

The figures show a significant increase in teenage pregnancies. In 1981, 57 girls out of 1,000 had a baby but the number has grown to 65. One girl in a hundred becomes pregnant before her 16th birthday, the legal age of consent.

Mental health problems in childhood include a 45 per cent increase during the 1980s in boys between 15 and 19 who committed suicide. The rate for teenage girls fell by 23 per cent over the same period. Although anorexia nervosa was rare, with a prevalence of about 2 per 1,000 among women and girls, the rate rose to 10 per 1,000 among middle-class schoolgirls.

The survey found wide differences in mortality rates. Manchester, Liverpool and Corby were among the ten places featuring the shortest life expectancy. People live longest in east Dorset.

☐ *Population Trends, Winter 1995* (HMSO, £9.60)

CHRIS HARRIS

Anthony Sher, who will play Stanley Spencer in a new play at the National Theatre, prepares for his role in *Stanley*, by Pam Gems, beside one of the murals by the English visionary artist in Sandham Memorial Chapel at Burghclere, Hampshire. Previews start on January 24

Colquhoun: vindicated by scientific research

Scientists find granny knows best

A MOTHER and daughter, for years ridiculed by scientists over claims that evening primrose oil can help hyperactive children, have been vindicated (Nick Nuttall writes).

Researchers in the United States, whose findings are published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, say the women's theories about the benefits of such supplements are sound.

Vicky Colquhoun, 75, and Sally Bunday set up the Hyperactive Children's Support Group in Bognor Regis, West Sussex, more than 20 years ago, advising parents with hyperactive children to use fatty acid supplements. The mother and daughter team, who have no formal qualifications, published their ideas and results in 1981. The theory was criticised and mostly dismissed by experts.

The scientific credibility has come from researchers at the department of food and nutrition at Purdue University. Mrs Colquhoun, who has four children and four great-grandchildren, said yesterday: "We are delighted . . . but what is distressing is that for 18 years many kids with hyperactivity have missed out."

'Long hours culture' puts British men at a loss

By Ian Murray

BRITISH men work the longest hours in Europe and have less time to spend with their families, according to a survey for the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Women suffer most because of the growing trend towards a "long hours culture", but men are beginning to suffer too. The survey adds that flexible working hours are a barrier to training and promotion.

"Excessively long working hours for managers have become the norm. Visibly working long hours has come to be an indicator of commitment, stamina and 'masculine' ways of working," the report says.

"Whilst some individual men may not like long working hours, it is a requirement with which they are more easily able to comply. Many women have to make a stark choice between their careers and their families."

The commission found "explosive growth" in part-time work: 20 per cent of women and 10 per cent on men are in part-time posts.

Some sectors rely almost exclusively on part-time or temporary workers to fill the lowest-grade jobs. Although the majority are women, the proportion of teenage male school-leavers is now almost as high.

"Broad-based issues such as equal pay for work of equal value, rights for part-time and temporary workers, working hours and the care of children and the elderly are scarcely new," the survey says. "These are concerns that women have long highlighted. What is new is that these issues are increasingly of relevance to men."

Mirror-writing mystery solved

By Jeremy Laurance, Health Correspondent

A BUMP on the head is not the route to genius but in rare circumstances it may unlock hidden skills, neurologists said yesterday. Specialists in brain dysfunction sought to explain the mysterious case of the girl with a writing disorder who was cured by a bump on the head.

Vicky Wilmore, 10, from Gorton, Manchester, began writing back to front and upside down a year ago after complaining of a headache. Her condition was apparently cured when she fell off a chair and banged her head while watching a football match on television. The next day she resumed writing normally.

Mirror writing is recognised by neurologists as a natural skill that some people have and others may develop as a result of brain damage caused, for example, by a stroke. Leonardo da Vinci, who is thought to have suffered a stroke, was accomplished at it.

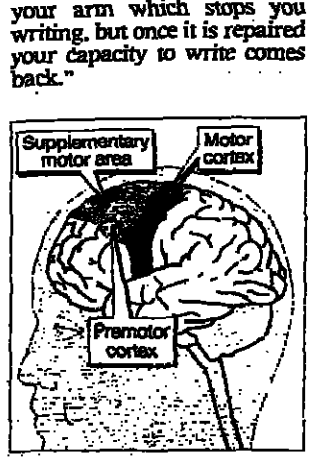
Neurologists say the difficulty occurs because the image of the visual world relayed from the retina of the eye to the back of the brain is interpreted by 20 to 30 specialised areas of the cerebral cortex. These processes may be damaged by a stroke or other injury.

Research suggests the capacity to mirror write may be linked with a part of the brain known as the supplementary motor area situated behind the frontal lobes where it could be affected by a bump.

Professor Richard Frackowiak of the National Hospital for Neurology, London, who has mapped the human brain using sophisticated scanning techniques, said

the most likely explanation of Vicki's symptoms was a psychological resistance to writing. But he said the position of the supplementary motor area close to the surface of the brain could make it susceptible to a bump.

Dr John Marshall, a neuropsychologist at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, and a specialist in brain damage, said: "A peripheral part of the girl's brain was obviously affected. It is like breaking your arm which stops you writing, but once it is repaired your capacity to write comes back."



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Report condemns attempted suicide rate

Drugs and violence 'rife at private jail'

By Richard Ford, home correspondent

DRUG abuse and violence are gripping Britain's largest private prison, where there have been more attempted suicides than at any other jail in the country, according to a report published today.

Five prisoners at Doncaster jail have killed themselves since it opened 18 months ago and there are said to have been almost a hundred attempted suicides.

The report by the Prison Reform Trust, entitled *Doncatraz*, condemns the culture of secrecy surrounding the operation of the jail and criticises the independent board of visitors for deciding against publishing its own report into the jail.

The jail, run by Premier Prison Services Ltd, has also been hit by 48 incidents of concerted indiscipline. In the nine months to the end of September there were 174 assaults and 197 drug finds since June 1994.

The Prison Service has served default notices on Premier linked to incidents in which the company was in breach of its contractual obligations, including one when a Category A inmate was not escorted within the jail in accordance with Prison Service requirements. Under the default notice system, the company can be fined up to £500 for breaches.

Other incidents included Premier's failure to deal satisfactorily with litter and graffiti, an error in the prison roll, and three occasions when individual inmates were temporarily located in the segregation unit without permission from the jail's Home Office appointed controller.

Stephen Shaw, director of the trust, said: "Members of boards of visitors have free access to a prison. The Doncaster board will have made hundreds of visits. Presumably they saw what was happening on the wings and voiced some disquiet. Regrettably they will not let the rest of us know what they found."

He condemned the board for deciding against publishing its report and said it was "outrageous" that the public's watchdog over the jail should keep its findings secret.

Mr Shaw rejected claims by Michael Forsyth, a former Prisons Minister, that the difficulties at the jail had been nothing more than teething troubles. "We need to know if Doncaster is improving, and whether its overall performance is now acceptable".

The prison, with houseblock accommodation for 720 inmates, opened in June 1994, but within three months the Prison Service had to second a senior prison governor to the jail "to ensure that the required service level agreement" was achieved.

Today's report also said that of the 629 staff recruited at all grades since the jail opened, 127 have resigned and 12 have been dismissed.

Guppy is freed to challenge sentence

By Richard Ford

DARIUS GUPPY, the fraudster who attempted a "perfect crime", was freed on bail yesterday after being granted leave to appeal against a sentence imposed for failing to pay compensation to Lloyd's insurers.

The Old Etonian and Oxford graduate was allowed bail by the High Court on £200,000 surety, on condition that he lives at his mews home in Notting Hill, west London, and does not apply for any travel documents.

Guppy, 29, a friend of Earl Spencer, brother of the Princess of Wales, was given a five-year sentence for faking a jewellery robbery in New York in 1990 and claiming £1.8 million insurance with an associate. At his trial, he was said to have boasted of pulling off "the perfect crime".

Last year, fines of £539,000 were cut to £227,000 and converted into a compensation order. He was told to pay within three months or serve three extra years. He is now appealing against the extra sentence.

Darius Guppy with his wife Patricia: he boasted of achieving the "perfect crime"

McLibel trial to pass legal milestone

By Frances Gi

THE libel action brought by the fast-food chain McDonald's against two environmentalists will enter the record books next week as the longest civil trial.

The case will reach its [illegible] day at the High Court on Monday. The previous longest civil action, in which two farmers sued Rechem International over alleged damage to cattle by waste incinerators, ended in the summer after [illegible] days.

The legal bill for the so-called McLibel trial, prompted by a leaflet titled "What's wrong with McDonald's? Everything they don't want you to know", is about £2 million so far. Sixty witnesses have been heard and there are 80 to come. The total cost could be up to £10 million.

The defendants, Dave Morris and Helen Steel, are acting for themselves with support from donations from animal welfare and environmental groups, local Labour parties and individuals. McDonald's has a top legal team headed by Richard Rampton, QC.

Price cuts come home to roost

FARM-FRESH turkeys will be in short supply in the run-up to Christmas because there is a 2 per cent drop in the number of birds coming into the shops. Last year's price-cutting in the supermarkets and new hygiene regulations are blamed for undermining producers' confidence.

Last year we ate three million traditional farm-fresh birds, compared with three million "standard fresh", which are gas-flushed, wrapped and chilled, and some six million frozen birds.

Butter prices are hardening, with prices roughly 15 per cent more this month than they were last Christmas. The summer drought has caused a European butter shortage. BSE publicity has led to cuts in beef prices.

The cold weather has affected supplies of fish, but ensures that the quality of what is available is particularly good. The week's best buy is kippers at about £1.50 a lb.

Promotions include:

Asda: extra large chicken (£2.04 a kg) £3.39, lamb shoulder £2.59 a kg, loose broccoli 39p a lb.

Budgens: Scottish smoked salmon £6.99 for 400g, pork cocktail sausages £3.29 a kg, clementines £1.19 a kg.

Co-op: fresh whole large chicken (2.2kg) £4.89, fresh whole turkey £2.49 a kg, fresh whole Scottish salmon £5.49 a kg, blue Stilton £4.49 a kg.

Harrods: rainbow trout £4 each, mini truckle of Applebys Cheshire cheese £18.50.

Iceland: duck in cherry sauce £2.99 for two portions, scampi £1.99 for 400g, minced lamb £1.69 for 907g, diced steak and kidney £1.29 for 454g.

Marks & Spencer: smoked salmon £6.99 for 300g, frozen prawns £4.99 for 400g, salmon en croute £4.50 for 700g.

Morrisons: salmon steaks £4.83 a kg, plaice fillet £6.59 a kg, fresh mussels 99p a kg, large sausage rolls £1.35 a kg.

Safeway: rump steak £7.86 a kg, whole/half leg of lamb £5.09 a kg, fully matured English farmhouse cheddar £2.29 a lb.

Sainsbury's: traditional mild oak smoked salmon £6.95 for 400g, frozen peeled prawns £5.99 for 800g, fresh standard beef mince £2.18 a kg, French brie £4.65 a kg.

Somerfield: beef fillet £15.65 a kg, roast chicken drumsticks £3.99 a kg, unsmoked gammon steaks £1.59 a lb.

Tesco: fresh half-leg of lamb £5.29 a kg, bone-in pork loin joint £3.39 a kg, smoked middle bacon £1.39 for 300g.

Waitrose: rainbow trout £1.89 a lb, smoked salmon slices £3.99 for 180g, mature blue Stilton £5.23 a kg.

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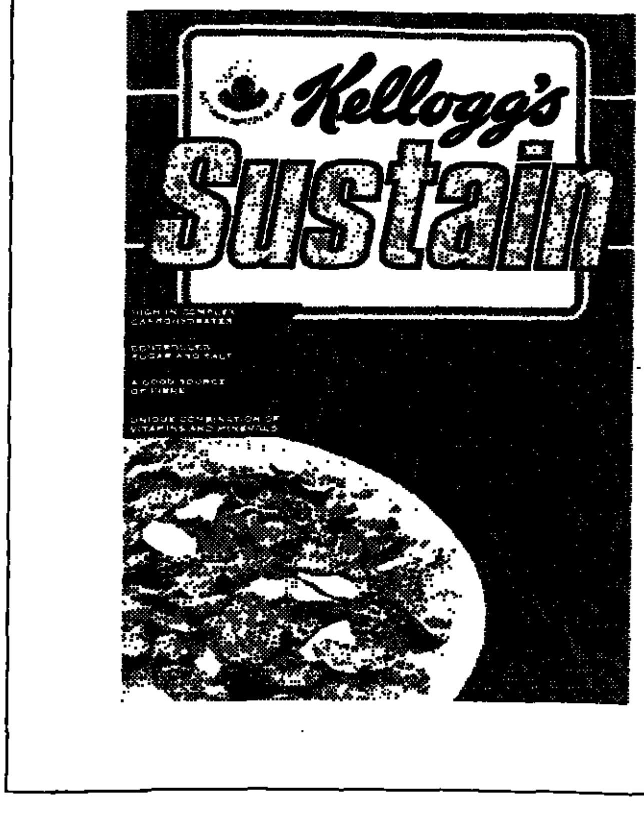

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Barbie the material girl trounces upstarts in toyshop sales battle

By Robin Young and Russell Jenkins

BARBIE DOLL and Action Man, those dinosaurs of the pre-computer age, are dominating toyshops again in the run-up to Christmas. The pink plastic goddess is making a triumphant comeback a generation after children first became fascinated by her endless wardrobe and glitzy lifestyle.

Barbie is fighting off competition from electronic toys such as Power Rangers to become the biggest seller this season and she is expected to win the British Association of Toy Retailers' award for the first time. In America, shoppers have been fighting each other to secure the Happy Holiday Barbie, wearing an emerald green gown with a white Victorian collar.

Internet users have been offering up to $175 (£113) for the $35 (£22) doll, which is aimed at adult collectors. The manufacturer Mattel has issued redemption certificates guaranteeing that Happy Holiday Barbies will be delivered to disappointed customers by the end of April. Since Barbara Millicent Roberts was born 36 years ago, she has made more than £1 billion for her Californian manufacturer. No wonder this material girl drives a pink Jaguar XJS convertible, has a wardrobe full of designer outfits from Gaultier, Galliano and Ozbek, and says "Let's go shopping".

Barbie dolls are made in factories all over the world as well as in California, including Italy, Mexico, China, Indonesia and Malaysia. (Mattel has a base in Wokingham, Berkshire, but Barbie dolls are not made there.)

Toymakers, retailers and social historians take her seriously. From the moment she appeared in 1959 she has reflected the social mores of her time. In the Sixties her patent boots and turtle-neck shift dress made her a perfect partner at the disco. In the Seventies she was transformed into a groovy chick with bells and hipsters. By the Eighties the improbability of her bosom was matched by the size of her power shoulder-pads.

Barbie still infuriates those suspicious about her hold over children. Earlier this year the charity Working Against Racism complained that she presented women as brainless sex objects obsessed with possessions and pursuing "an indulgent life of luxury".

But some feminists have argued that Barbie is the ultimate role model for girls. Trailing her boyfriend Ken in her wake, she stands proud and self-sufficient. The literary critic G.M. Lord is the leading exponent of this school. Her book *Forever Barbie — the Unauthorised Biography of a Real Doll* praises Barbie as "rebel, role model and goddess", despite revealing that she was based on a German doll called Bild Lili, who in the newspaper *Bild-Zeitung* entertained men with her lascivious behaviour, lacy underwear and black stilettos.

According to Hamleys in Regent Street, London, Barbie is selling fastest as a butterfly princess, but shopping centres around Britain say that she is looking best in *Baywatch* mode, complete at £12.98 with whistle, binoculars, buoy, swimsuits and a talking dolphin.

Another popular model is designed to appeal to would-be hairdressers, Cut-and-Style Barbie with permanently reshapeable hair at £9.99. There is a similar model of Ken. Girls can have Shaving Fun Ken, a doll trying to cope with a beard like Richard Branson's.

Leading article, page 19

Action urged over missing millions

Bribed MoD chief keeps secret of his Swiss accounts

By Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent

MINISTRY of Defence investigators have failed to gain access to the Swiss bank accounts of a top official jailed for receiving more than £1.3 million in corrupt payments from contractors.

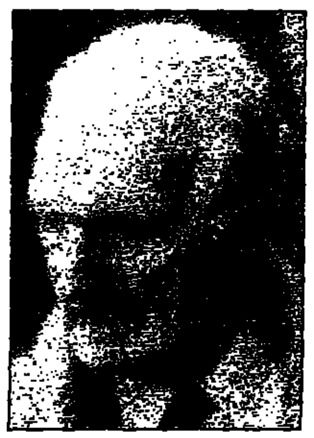
Yesterday the Commons Public Accounts Committee urged the ministry to redouble its efforts to trace missing money believed to have been hidden by Gordon Foxley, a former director of ammunition procurement.

Foxley is serving four years after being being convicted last year on 12 charges of receiving corrupt payments from three overseas companies. In a new report, the committee said "a great deal of money" was being held in Swiss bank accounts, but the MoD did not know how much was involved.

Huge sums of cash — reported to be near £3.5 million — were paid by three foreign companies as bribes or secret commissions in return for defence industry contracts. The committee said: "We are concerned that the department has yet to identify all the corrupt funds involved in this case and we urge them to continue their efforts to gain access to the Swiss bank accounts controlled by Gordon Foxley."

Despite the fact it was "one of the worst cases of corruption" that the committee had examined, the ministry said the companies involved had won the contracts because they had offered lower prices. The ministry told the committee that, in this respect, the British taxpayer had done well.

The ministry had found little direct evidence that Foxley had been able to influence the contracts in the direction of the three companies. The suggestion was that Foxley had been able to steer the companies towards the lower prices they should offer, rather than distort the system by awarding contracts to firms making higher-priced bids. The ministry's view was that Foxley had run "one of the best stings". He would win whichever way events turned. If the overseas companies won the contracts, they were convinced that it was due to his efforts and he had taken the money. When they had lost, they had not paid him enough money and needed to pay him more next time.



Foxley: four years' jail for "sting" on contracts

One of the problems was that the ministry still did not know how long Foxley had been running the sting, the MPs said. Investigators were unable to give the committee any grounds for hope that it would be able to gain access to the Swiss accounts.

The committee called on the ministry to recover the largest possible sum from all those involved in the case.

Civil actions have already started against Foxley, aged 70, members of his family and the three companies involved, Fratelli Borletti of Italy, Gebruder Junghans of Germany and AS Raufoss of Norway.

The committee recommended a package of measures to cut opportunities for fraud. The value of possible fraud under investigation in 1993-94 was about £22 million.

☐ Committee of Public Accounts, 46th Report, *Ministry of Defence: Fraud in Defence Procurement* (Stationery Office; £11)

GILL ALLEN

Christmas past and present: German blown-glass baubles made in the 1950s and Nottingham's much-loved Santa

All Santa wants is a new grotto

By John Shaw

A HOMELESS Santa Claus which for many years cheered Christmas shoppers is on the lookout for a friendly new grotto where it can dispense festive goodwill.

At present, the 6ft figure is next to the tree at Christie's in South Kensington, a temporary home until it goes under the hammer as lot 1180 today in an auction devoted exclusively to Christmas.

John Weedon, 58, the antique dealer selling the model, remembers it standing outside Burton's, a high-class grocery and confectionery business is Smithy Row, Nottingham. "His sack was full of packets of sweets and things which were a luxury just after the war. We hadn't seen things like that before. Children would go up and whisper secrets of what they wanted on Christmas Day.

"But to get close to him you had to stand on his boots and eventually all these little feet wore his toecaps away. His last appearance was in 1953."

Mr Weedon is selling the Santa, which has an estimate of £1,000 to £1,500, as he runs down his stock at Top Hat Antiques before retiring in a year or two.

Among other lots are a set of eight large painted baubles to decorate the Christmas tree in pink, silver, gold and blue (estimate £300 to £500). They were made in Germany in the 1950s. Candles were a popular way of lighting the tree but they were replaced by lights in the 1920s. The sale has a set with bubbling liquid interiors, from the 1940s, also at £300 to £500.

Christmas cards had their origins in 15th-century Germany but flourished globally in the Victorian era. Two classics from Raphael Tuck & Sons include one 3D example with a church, angels, the baby Jesus and a festive tree behind church windows. A handwritten message on the back reads: "To Winifred, from Grandma Motherhead, 1901." It has a £150 to £200 estimate. Last year a pristine example was bought back by the company for its archives for £600.

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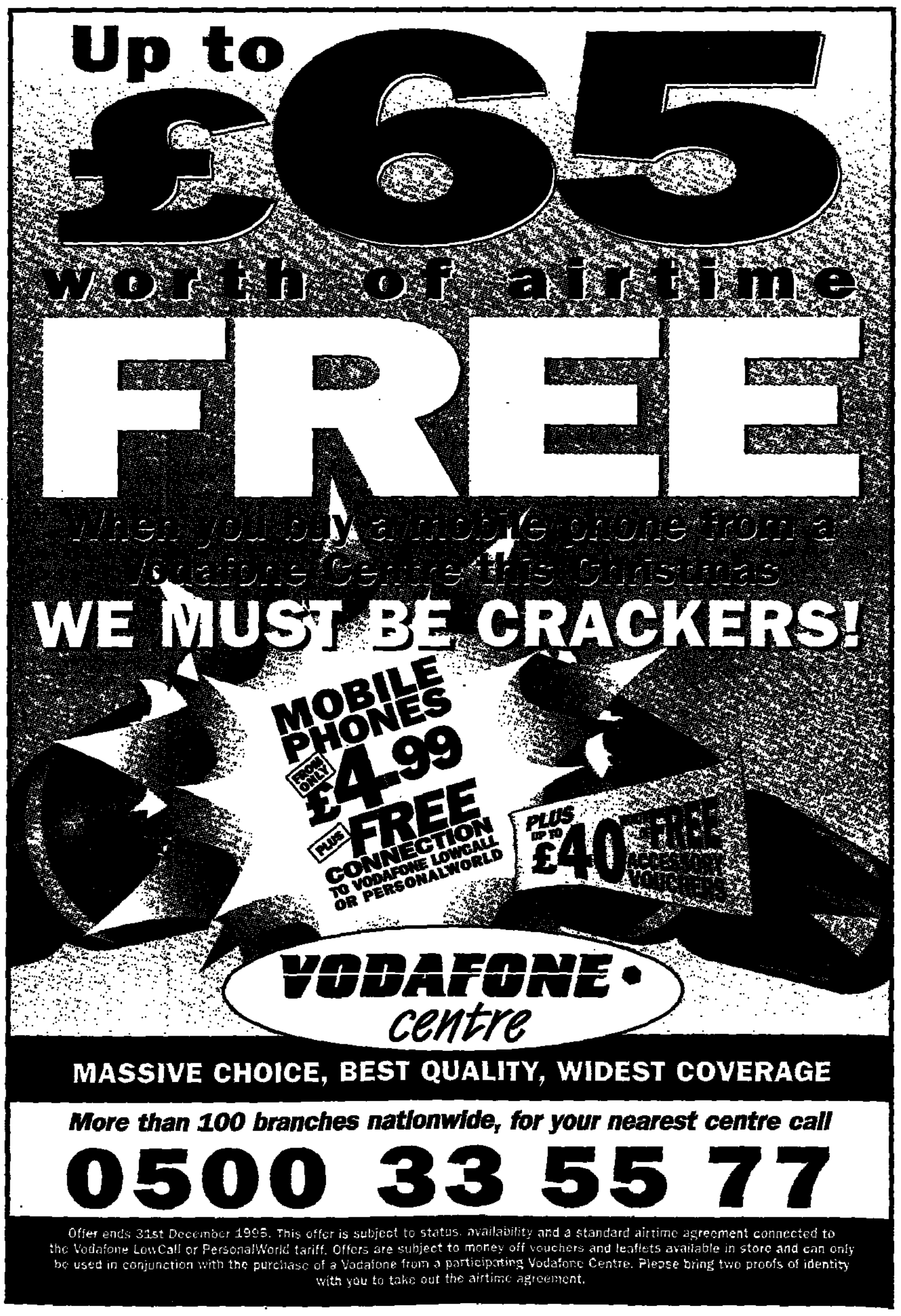

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Clarke claws back support but most voters still think his policies are bad for the country

Budget hostility is tempered by feeling of personal gain

By Peter Riddell

AFTER last week's Budget more people think that the Chancellor's policies will benefit them personally than at any time since the last election, even though the public remain highly critical of the Government's overall strategy and believe that Labour would manage the economy best.

The latest MORI poll for *The Times*, undertaken last weekend, shows that the response to the Budget is not as completely hostile as the first snap poll suggested. The public's unfavourable opinion of the Budget's impact on the economy contrasts with a less negative view of the specific effect on people's pockets.

Opposition to the Government's strategy of reducing spending to cut levels of taxation has risen since the summer. In late June, this approach was backed by 50 to 40 per cent: now it is opposed by 54 to 30 per cent.

But a quarter of the public believe that the Budget proposals are a good thing for them personally. This is the highest level since March 1992, just before the last election. The overall balance of those regarding the Budget proposals as good or bad for them personally is still negative, at minus 22 points. But this compares with minus 52 points after the 1994 Budget and similar levels over the previous two years.

Views about whether the Budget is good divide sharply along class, party and regional lines with, for example, a 59 point gap between the views of professional people and managers, and those of unskilled workers. The proportion believing that the Budget proposals are good rather than bad for the country is now minus 32 points, compared with minus 45 points after the November 1994 Budget.

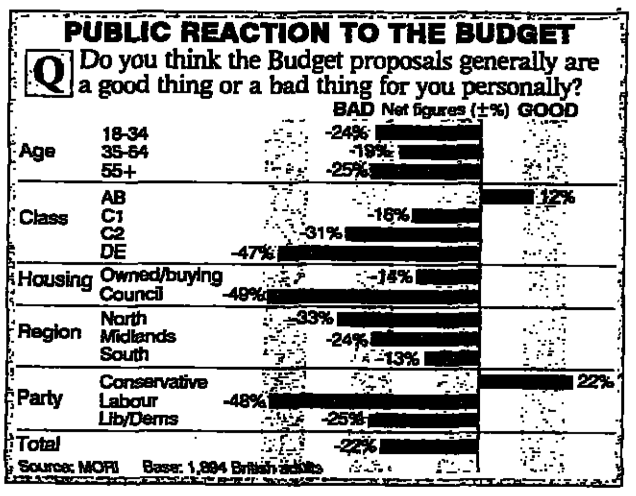
Tory support nationally has risen by two points to 28 per cent in the two weeks since the last poll was undertaken in late November, while backing for Labour has dropped one point to 55 per cent, around the middle of its range throughout this year. Support for the Liberal Democrats has slipped one point to 13 per cent. Tory support has risen particularly among those aged 18 to 34, among skilled workers and in southern England. These are all groups among which the Tories need to win back support.

The poll returns to questions asked two weeks ago about satisfaction with the way Kenneth Clarke is doing his job as Chancellor and agreement with whether, in the long term, this Government's policies will improve the economy. There has been only a marginal shift in either measure. But this masks a sharp improvement in the number agreeing rather than disagreeing that this Government's policies will improve the economy among those aged 18 to 24 and those with mortgages. There has been a 21 point gain among those who have switched away from the Tories since the 1992 election. This highlights the Tories' potential to win back support among those who have been most disillusioned.

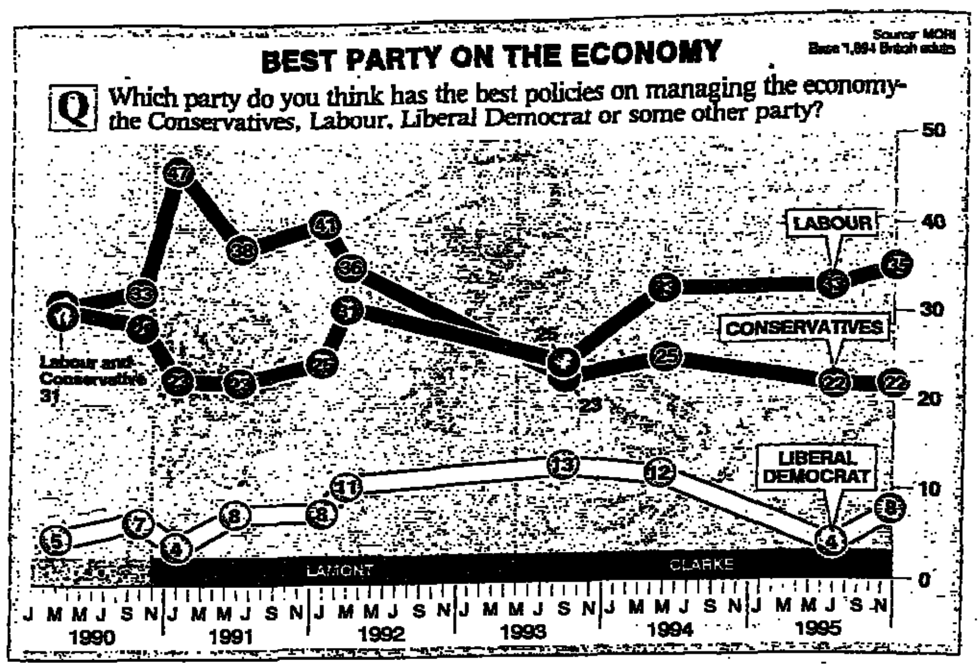
Nonetheless, the Budget has failed to change the public's overall negative view of the Government's economic policies. In marked contrast with the position before 1992, Labour is reckoned to have the best policies on managing the economy by a record 35 per cent, against 22 per cent for the Tories. In October 1990, when the Tories were very unpopular and just before Margaret Thatcher was ousted, the Tories were still reckoned to have the best policies on managing the economy.

The Budget has also failed to shift public expectations about the economy. The MORI economic optimism index, measuring those believing that the economy will improve in the next 12 months, now stands at minus 16 points, compared with minus 18 points at the end of November.

☐ *MORI interviewed a representative quota sample of 1,894 adults at 148 ward sampling points across Britain. Interviews were conducted face-to-face from December 1 to 4. Data were weighted to match the profile of the population. Voting intention figures exclude those who say they would not vote (8 per cent), are undecided (7 per cent) or who refuse to name a party (3 per cent).*



Kenneth Clarke: the most voters since 1992 think his Budget will help them personally



Major's performance wins increasing Tory approval

JOHN MAJOR has improved his approval rating among Tory supporters to the highest level since the Maastricht battles of 1992-93, according to the MORI poll.

While Mr Major's personal rating has remained flat among the public as a whole, it has continued to rise among Tory supporters. The index measuring those satisfied less dissatisfied with the way he is doing his job as Prime Minister is now minus 36 points, the same as two months ago. But over the same period, his rating among Tory supporters has improved from plus 34 points to plus 42 points.

However, the poll shows a continuing high level of dissatisfaction with the way the Government is running the country. This index stands at minus 65 points, slightly lower than in the past few months. More Tory supporters remain dissatisfied than satisfied with the Government.

Tony Blair's rating as Labour leader has slipped in the past fortnight, but remains very positive with two-to-one approval among the public and more than five to one among Labour supporters.

Paddy Ashdown is well-regarded by the public. By a 42 to 29 per cent margin, the public is satisfied rather than dissatisfied with the way he is doing his job as Liberal Democrat leader. Party supporters approve of his performance by a more than five to one margin.

Broadcasting Bill delayed by dispute

By Nicholas Wood, chief political correspondent

PUBLICATION of the Broadcasting Bill has been delayed because of a dispute between two government departments.

Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, was due to unveil the Government's plans for a reorganisation of British broadcasting today but has been forced to call off her press conference because of objections from the Trade and Industry Deparment. It is understood that the DTI complained that parts of the Bill had not been thought through and could give rise to trouble from Tory backbenchers.

Mrs Bottomley was said last night to be displeased about the delay, which she regards as stemming from excessive caution on the part of DTI officials. Leading Tories described the postponement as "pathetic" and accused the DTI of nitpicking.

Although the Broadcasting Bill is not highly contentious politically, it is commercially sensitive and doubts have been expressed about whether the proposals are workable.

The Bill proposes to relax the rules on cross-media ownership, enabling newspaper companies to become owners of terrestial television stations. However, the framework would exclude big media combines such as News International, parent company of *The Times*, and Mirror Group newspapers from venturing into this field.

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to Northern Ireland ministers and the Prime Minister followed by a debate on the European Union. In the Lords: debates on the Community Care (Direct Payments) Bill, second reading; Health and Safety (Repeals and Revocations) Regulations; Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order; Contracting Out (Administration of the Teachers' Superannuation Scheme) Order; and the European Communities (Definition of Treaties) (Statute of the European Schools) Order.

TODAY in the Commons: debate on the Government's policy against crime. The House of Lords is not sitting.

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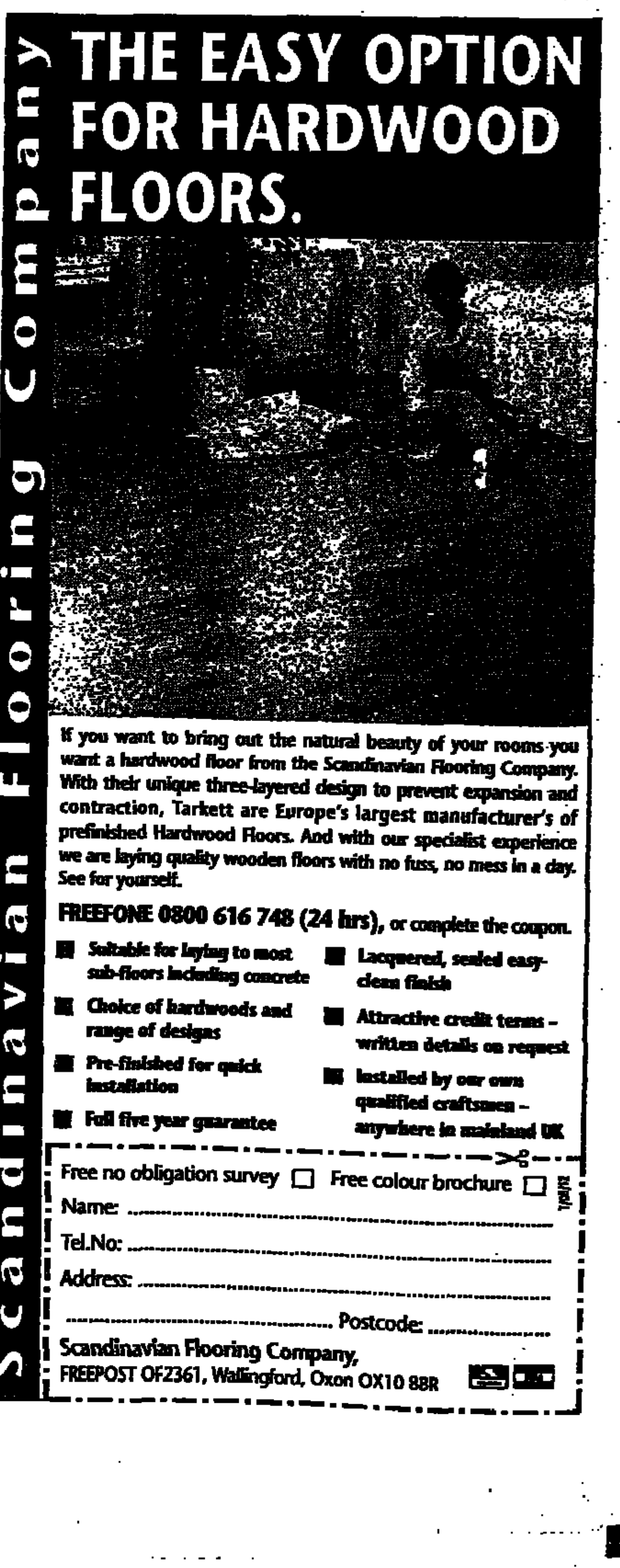
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Rifkind strives to pacify sceptics before EU summit

By James Landale and Alice Thomson

BRITAIN'S veto in Brussels need not be weakened when the European Union takes in new members from the former Eastern bloc, Malcolm Rifkind told the Commons yesterday.

In a clear attempt to pacify Tory Euro-sceptics before next week's EU summit in Madrid, the Foreign Secretary said that qualified majority voting (QMV) in the Council of Ministers — under which Britain cannot block laws by itself — should not be extended.

Most other EU countries believe that QMV should be extended to speed up decision-making in a larger EU.

Mr Rifkind was speaking at the beginning of a debate on Europe in which he set out the Government's approach to next week's summit. There was "an historic mission" to bring Eastern European countries into the EU. This, he said, would improve the security and prosperity of the whole of Europe. But he rejected outright claims that this would involve a greater extension of QMV.

"The Government is very clear," he said. "We do not believe there is a case for an extension of QMV and we do not believe that enlargement of the EU means that in any way."

But he accepted that the weighting system for voting in the Council of Ministers — under which a country's voting power is determined by the size of its population — would have to be changed. For example, if Malta joined the EU, it should not have the same voting strength as The Netherlands, which has a much larger population. He also said it would be "ludicrous" for each new country to have a commissioner of its own. Enlargement would also require the EU to reform of both the common agricultural Policy and the amount of aid paid out in structural funds.

Turning to the Madrid summit, Mr Rifkind said that John Major would press for less rhetoric from Europe, and more action. "At Madrid, our Prime Minister will again reinforce the message: we want progress on enhancing competitiveness, improving the quality and reducing the quantity of legislation, and deregulating labour markets to make them more responsive, creating jobs and reducing unemployment."

Mr Rifkind said there were encouraging signs coming out of the European Commission. "It is fashionable to bash Brussels. It is the bureaucratic capital of the world. It is the home of red tape. Many of these criticisms are justfied. But the fact is that under the new Commission, things may now be changing."

He said that Jacques Santer, the European Commission president, made this clear in his recent Guildhall speech, in which he said that Europe needed "less action but better action".

Mr Rifkind challenged Labour to clarify its policies on Europe, accusing the party's spokesmen of saying one thing on paper but another in speeches. He also attacked Labour for opposing permanent opt-outs from EU policies and for backing an extension of QMV.

For Labour, Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, told Mr Rifkind that he was being dictated to by the Euro-sceptics. "The Euro-sceptics are in charge. There is now no hoop too tight through which ministers will not slim down their beliefs in order to squeeze through."

He teased Mr Rifkind, saying: "The Tory Party in the European debate now has the unity of the prison camp and Sir Teddy Taylor and Teresa Gorman have the keys."

Mr Cook refused to state categorically that Labour was committed to a single currency but said that Britain should enter when conditions were right. He said Labour was committed to the principle of unanimous voting in Europe for decision-making on budgetary policy, taxation, external border controls and foreign and security issues and if necessary would be prepared to use the veto in any of those areas.

Bitter Stratford Tories put their trust in Maples

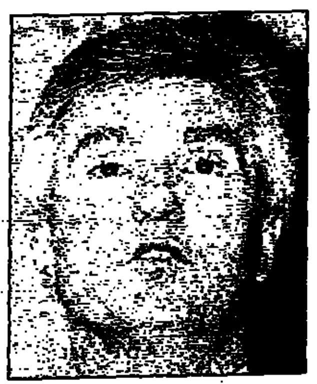
By Alice Thomson, political reporter

THE Tory burghers of Stratford-upon-Avon have chosen a squeaky-clean new candidate to replace Alan Howarth, the MP who humiliated them by defecting to Labour.

John Maples, selected on Wednesday from a list of 219 candidates, is an ultra-loyal former deputy party chairman and a strong family man.

When Mr Howarth eloped to Labour nine weeks ago, only a day before the party conference, Stratford, with its 23,000 Tory majority, was devastated. Party loyalists called him a quisling and a traitor. Many in the constituency recalled their shame when John Profumo, then the Stratford MP, admitted his affair with Christine Keeler and helped the downfall of Harold Macmillan's Government in 1963.

The search for a successor to Mr Howarth began only hours after Don Rushton, the association chairman, emerged ashen-faced to comment on the MP's defection. A committee was formed to sift through stacks of CVs sent from the candidates department at Conservative Central Office, and an advertisement was placed in the local newspaper.



Maples: political experience paid off

This time the constituency was determined to find a candidate who would not embarrass them in any way. Peter Smith, the agent, said yesterday: "I think the association would crack if we had another scandal. None of us could face even mentioning that pathetic Mr Howarth. We were all very aware we couldn't make another disastrous choice. We looked at anyone who had a serious interest in the job but loyalty and honour were paramount."

Twenty candidates were interviewed and 234 people turned up on Wednesday to choose from a shortlist of three. Mr Maples, 52, who lost his Lewisham seat in 1992 had only one black mark, the leaked Maples memorandum last year, which spelled out how unpopular the Government was. But he had failed to secure several other seats.

Hugo Summerson, an old Harrovian and MP for Walthamstow until 1992 was once voted the most romantic MP at Westminster by the publisher Mills and Boon. The third candidate was Desmond Swain, a computer systems development manager. All three have solid family lives.

Mr Maples' experience got him the job. "Most Tory constituencies have a sitting MP who can show the new candidate the ropes," Mr Smith said. "Here our sitting MP is the enemy so we needed someone who knew what he was doing and could immediately smash Mr Howarth."

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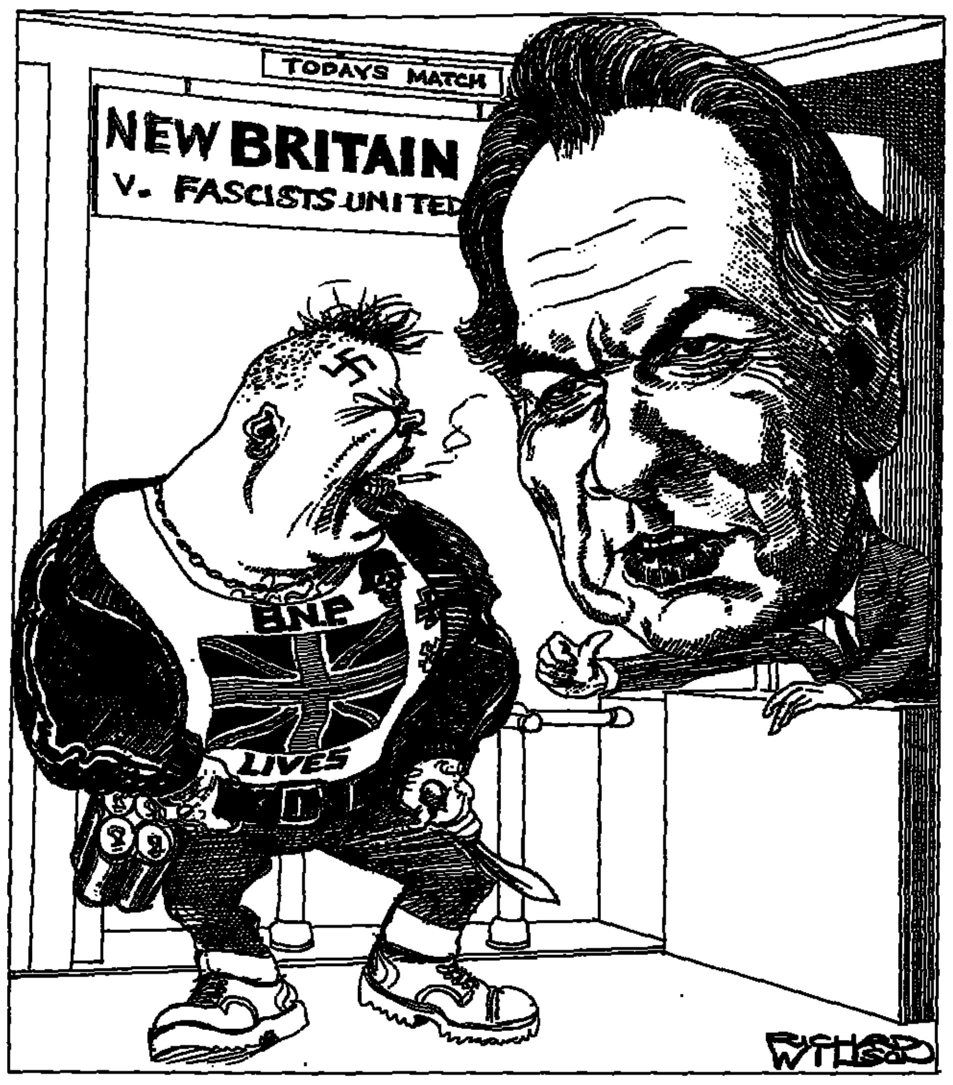

Labour aims to kick hooligans out of football

By James Landale, political reporter

LABOUR announced plans yesterday for a partnership between government and football to help to combat hooliganism and repair the sport's damaged reputation.

Jack Cunningham, the Shadow National Heritage Secretary, said Labour would form a football "task force" to draw up proposals for a Labour government to implement. The new body, made up of members of national football organisations, including representatives of fans and players, and government officials, would report within a year of Labour taking office.

Mr Cunningham said Labour's Football Charter, published yesterday, would address the key issues facing British football. These included the re-emergence of hooliganism by "far-right extremist thugs", alleged financial irregularities and match-fixing, illegal drug use by players, rising ticket prices, restrictive TV coverage and the precarious finances of smaller clubs.

Although little extra money would be available, Labour would introduce legislation to "breathe new life" into the game. The central plank of the Charter is the prevention of hooliganism. Labour ministers would use more restrictive orders to stop known hooligans travelling abroad, and would seek to impose sanctions on fans convicted of offences abroad.

Mr Cunningham said that Labour's task force would restructure the Football Association to speed up decision-making, investigate the role of television — especially where events are bought up by subscription channels — and examine claims that some fans are being priced out of the game. "We want football to genuinely be a sport for all," he said.

Labour's charter was welcomed by most mainstream football organisations, although the television commentator Jimmy Hill, who is chairman of Fulham Football Club, said that it would be "miraculous" if even half Labour's proposals were enacted.

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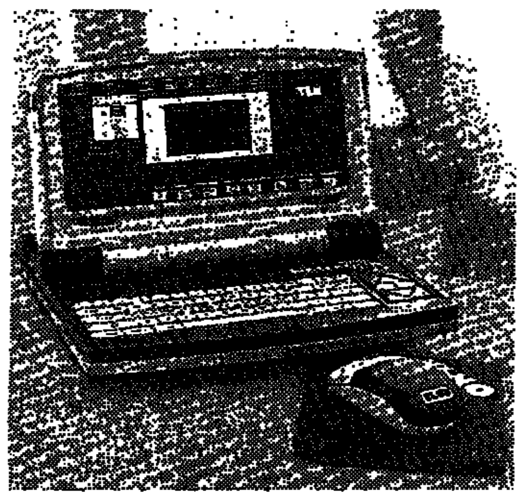

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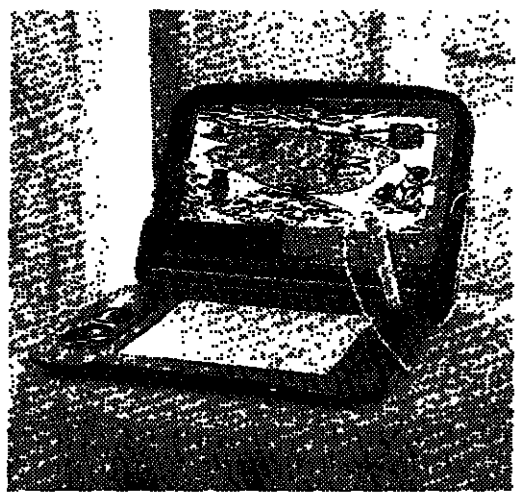

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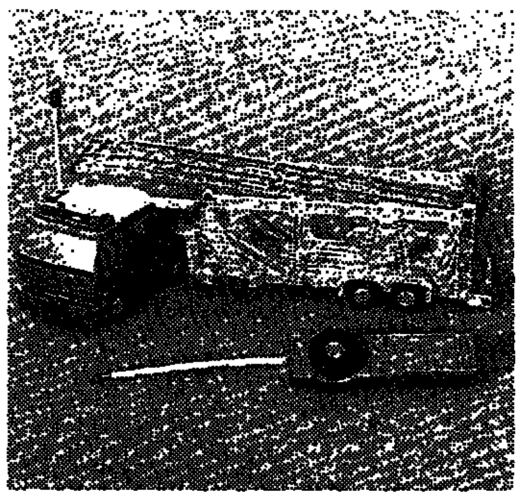

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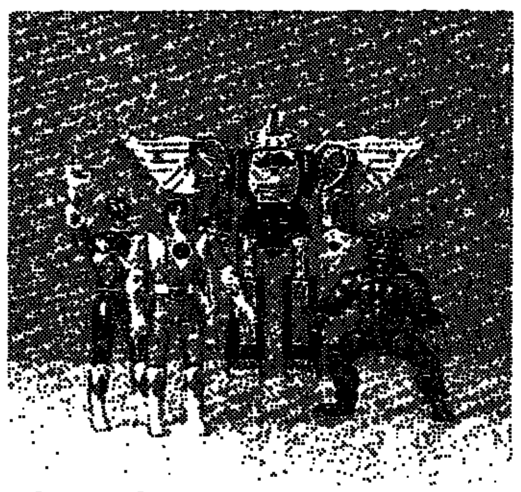

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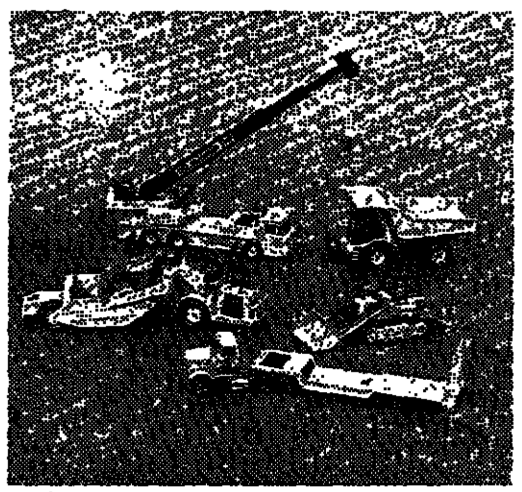

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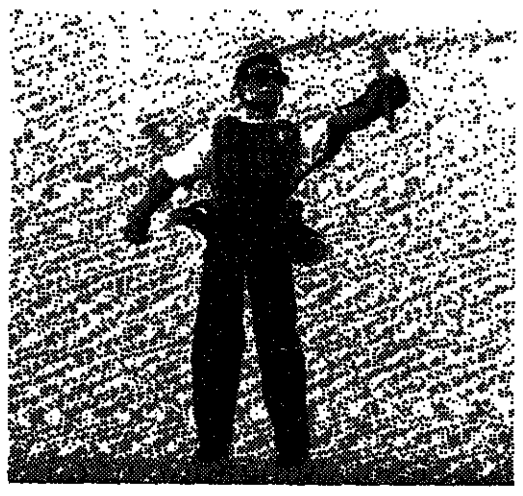

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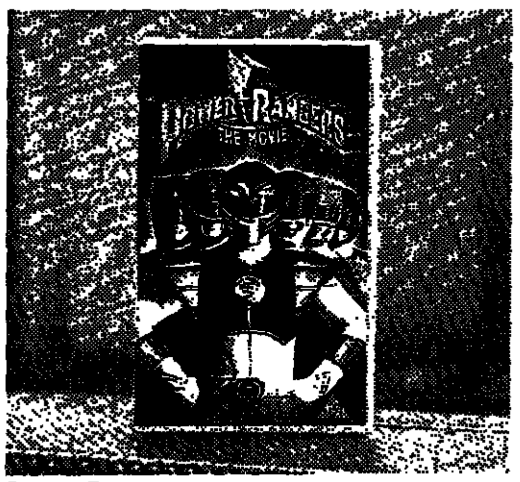

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Times Christmas Appeal: skill and devotion are essential when caring for young cancer patients

Nurses with a cool head and big heart

By John Young

"IT IS not easy working with children with cancer," Susan Dyer says. "It is something you choose to do, and it needs a lot of emotional investment.

"It's quite different from a child who comes into hospital for just four or five days and then goes home. Here it is a long-term business, and you are nursing the families as well as the children."

Ms Dyer is one of three nurses at the Royal Marsden Hospital in Sutton, south London, who at mid-morning on a typically busy day have found a few minutes to talk about their work. With them is Jenny Thompson, the manager of children and adolescent services, who has overall responsibility for standards of nursing and healthcare and who in another time might have been known as Matron. The three are among about 35 nurses looking after some 15 in-patients and considerably more out-patients returning for periodical treatment and check-ups.

THE TIMES Christmas Appeal in aid of the Royal Marsden Hospital

Ms Dyer, from Adelaide, South Australia, came to Britain to pursue a BSc degree in paediatric oncology. Two years ago the course was established by the hospital in association with the Institute of Cancer Research and is the only one in Britain that offers children's cancer nursing studies at degree level.

She describes the job as holistic, combining technical skills with understanding and sympathy. "You have to be very much on the ball," says Ms Dyer, who is in her mid-twenties. "Children can quickly become ill and develop side-effects."

Patricia Cushing, the ward manager, in her mid-thirties, trained at Westminster Hospital and came to the Royal Marsden ten years ago. For her it was quite a late change. "But I have a natural affinity for children, and somehow it was always something I knew I would do," she says.

MICHAEL POWELL

Staff Nurse Susan Dyer has a friendly word with Jake Coombes-Goodfellow at the Royal Marsden Hospital

Nursing cancer patients is very intensive work, she points out. The doctors prescribe the drugs used in chemotherapy, but the nurses are responsible for administering large quantities of highly toxic substances, which demands considerable skill and care. "Since I have been here not a single treatment has remained the same," she adds. "All of them have changed."

Sometimes she has to struggle to keep her emotions under control. "That is not to say that you don't go home afterwards and have a jolly good cry. Sometimes one has a cry with the parents. But you have to try to maintain normality in an abnormal situation."

Yvonne Wright, 40, trained as a children's nurse at the Great Ormond Street children's hospital in London and returned there for a course in intensive care. She has been at the Royal Marsden for two and a half years. "It's a lovely place," she says.

"I have done a lot of general paediatrics, but this is something special." There are emotional problems with sick children, she concedes. "But you also have to be very much on the alert, because when children become ill it often happens very quickly. Another difference is that we are in a sense treating not just the child but the whole family. We all feel part of a family and we all support each other," she says. "I would say that having the parents here is a great advantage, not a drawback."

All the nurses emphasise the need for teamwork, and Ms Thompson is anxious to stress the professionalism required of them. They are highly respected by the doctors, who frequently consult them on what treatment patients should be given, she says. But they still need to be assertive and stand up for themselves in the company of their medical colleagues.

She also insists that nursing children with cancer is something special. "Adult patients are generally much the same," she says. "But with children you have to think about their ages and how they must be addressed. How much a child is allowed to know is really up to the parents, although of course he or she has a basic right to know.

"If one of them asks a question, such as 'am I going to get better?' or 'am I going to die?', one has to try to give an honest answer. One answer is to ask the child why he or she is asking."

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MEDICAL BRIEFING

Skin patches can signal a painful choice

Dr Thomas Stuttaford

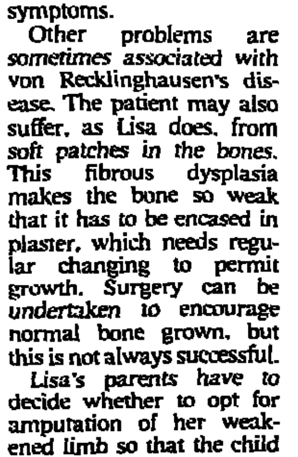
The infectious grin of ten-month-old Lisa Dodd warmed the hearts of newspaper readers yesterday as they shivered in the snow on their way to work. But they would have been saddened to read that she may have to have a leg amputated. Lisa has von Recklinghausen's disease, multiple neurofibromatosis.

Patients with this condition have five or more large pigmented spots on their skin, known as café au lait patches because it looks like coffee has been spilt on the skin. They also have a superfluity of small skin tags, frequently around the neck and armpits.

Associated with the pigmented patches are tumours, felt beneath the skin, which grow on the sheaths of the cutaneous nerves. These are usually harmless, and rarely become malignant, provided they do not press on any vital organ. Occasionally a benign neurofibroma grows on a nerve sheath within the spinal column, where the pressure it exerts may cause paralysis or other neurological symptoms.

Other problems are sometimes associated with von Recklinghausen's disease. The patient may also suffer, as Lisa does, from soft patches in the bones. This fibrous dysplasia makes the bone so weak that it has to be encased in plaster, which needs regular changing to permit growth. Surgery can be undertaken to encourage normal bone grown, but this is not always successful.

Lisa's parents have to decide whether to opt for amputation of her weakened limb so that the child may be spared years of hospital attendance, encasement in plaster and repeated surgery, or whether to sacrifice her lifestyle now to retain the chance of having a serviceable limb when she grows up.


Lisa Dodd may have to have a leg removed

Neurofibromatosis is a comparatively common disease affecting one child in every 3,000 births. It is inherited as a dominant factor, which means that if either parent has it their children have a 50 per cent chance of developing the condition.

In a third of cases, von Recklinghausen's disease presents no problems and is only a matter of comment when a doctor notices a sign during a routine examination. Another third of patients have no physical ill-effects but seek treatment for cosmetic problems caused by the lumps, by bony changes or by pigmented skin.

The other third of patients have physical problems, because of pressure from tumours or from associated conditions as well as fibrous dysplasia. These may include overgrowth of the blood vessels within the orbit, heart disease, a lateral twist to the spine and narrowing of the arteries to the kidneys. Other nervous tissue may cause trouble; in particular the eighth auditory nerve can be affected, a defect which is inherited separately.

Tumours of the brain or its covering, the meninges, are also more common in patients who have von Recklinghausen's disease.

It is possible that the condition is more common than supposed and underdiagnosed because doctors are not alert to it. Some years ago a young boy of my acquaintance complained of increasing weakness in his limbs. He was seen by doctors of increasing fame and distinction, who decided that the boy's trouble was psychological and therefore prescribed antidepressants.

Fortunately the family had a good GP, who gave the patient the basic neurological examination he had learnt as a student. These simple tests showed that the boy had a a neurofibroma in his spine. This was removed and, despite the guarded prognosis of the neurosurgeon, he made an uneventful recovery and grew into a powerful young man more than 6ft tall without any weakness.

Let us hope that Lisa has an equally good result.

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Power vacuum in Greece persists as Mimi keeps hospital vigil for ailing Prime Minister

Papandreou's wife fights to ensure her political survival

FROM MICHAEL BINYON IN ATHENS

MIMI PAPANDREOU has not appeared in public for three weeks. But from inside the Onassis Cardiac Centre where she has immured herself to tend her critically ill husband, the former air hostess and her entourage are manoeuvring to ensure her political survival should the Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou, die or be removed from office.

Her chances of success are slim. The contemptuous leadership of Pasok, the ruling Socialist party, is determined that the woman who had an increasing hold over her ailing and doting husband, 76, should play no part in politics after the Papandreou era.

The party sees her as an upstart. Like the Greek public, whose earlier amused indulgence of the Prime Minister's late marriage has turned to resentment, Pasok is aghast at the Third World image of a Government run by an old man's former mistress.

Mimi has not succeeded in finding herself a parliamentary seat. But she has one vital card: the refusal of her husband to resign. And as long as he is alive, there is no clear method for removing him.

Senior party officials are beginning to speak openly of the need to end the political limbo. But as Mr Papandreou's precarious health improves — he was said to be speaking to his advisers yesterday after a tracheotomy to ease his breathing — his ministers are wary of speaking out.

Greece is now paying the price for decades of charismatic leadership. Postwar politics have been so dominated by three forceful men — Constantine Karamanlis, the former Prime Minister and President, and Mr Papandreou and his father, George — that other democratic institutions are enfeebled.

All decisions have been taken by the Prime Minister. Parliament plays only a minor role. And political parties are rarely vehicles created by strong individuals: Mr Karamanlis founded New Democracy, the conservative opposition, and Mr Papandreou founded the Panhellenic Socialist Movement in 1974.

The titanic struggle between the two also led to the emasculation of the presidency; it was stripped of power in 1985 by Mr Papandreou in an attempt to force out President Karamanlis. There are now no mechanisms for dealing with the present power vacuum.

The constitution provides for an acting Prime Minister only if the incumbent resigns or "is not present" — an ambiguous phrase — and does not specify for how long. Mr Papandreou's doctors are refusing to take the responsibility of declaring that he will *never recover sufficient* strength to resume his job.

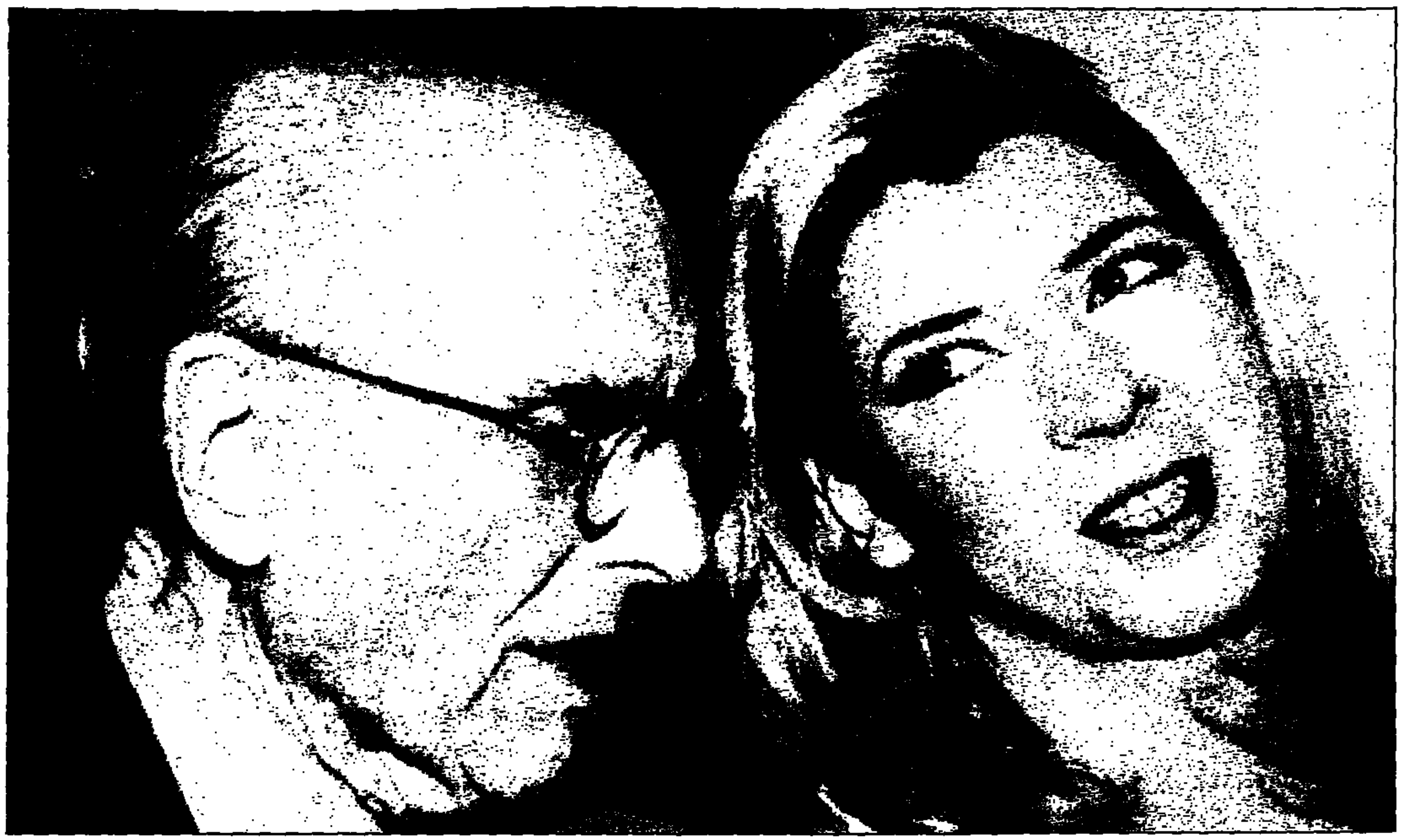
Unless he resigns, he cannot easily be removed. And Mimi, presumed to be deciding for him, is trying to strike a deal. She wants to protect her position and Mr Papandreou's entourage, knowing that they will be jettisoned as soon as their rivals feel strong enough.

Her bargaining chip is Pasok's need for unity. It is two years before a general election is due, and Pasok, whose popularity is slipping, will be defeated if it splits.

Any contender wanting the blessing of the Papandreou inheritance may propose, in typically Balkan manner, a future role for the widow. Such a deal might be countenanced by Akis Tsohatzopoulos, the acting Prime Minister, long a colourless Papandreou lieutenant. But the two leading contenders, Costas Simitis, the former Industry Minister, and Gerassimos Arsenis, the Defence Minister, are unlikely to agree to it. They have the stronger hand — and also the support of Vasso Papandreou, the former European Commissioner, who fell out with Mr Papandreou (they are not related) and was left out of the Government. Identified with Pasok's pro-European "progressive" wing, she is a popular politician. Polls showed that only she and Mr Simitis would defeat New Democracy in an election. There is every incentive for them to join forces — and reject Mimi and the populist legacy of Mr Papandreou.

The opposition is keeping quiet, counting on a Pasok split. Mimi is also playing the dutiful wife while all Greece sympathises with the stricken Prime Minister. The role has brought her some respect but no political leverage.

Pasok leaders insist that the paralysis cannot continue, and that sooner or later, they will force a leadership election even if Mimi holds out against her husband's resignation.



Andreas Papandreou with his wife, Mimi, the former air hostess. Last month she resisted pressure to renounce her interest in a political career

Safety fears rise on 'babyflot' flights

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL IN MOSCOW

THE third air disaster in a week in the former Soviet Union yesterday put the safety standards of the dozens of small private airlines under the spotlight.

An aircraft disappeared without trace 20 minutes before it was due to land in Khabarovsk, 9,000 miles east of Moscow. As darkness fell, a search for it was called off. Russian television reported that there were 89 passengers and five crew on board.

The Tupolev Tu154 was operated by Khabarovsk Airlines, one of the 400 "babyflot" offshoots that sprang from the monopoly Soviet operator, Aeroflot, after deregulation. A ticket bought in an Aeroflot office often leads the unsuspecting passenger to a seat in one of these airlines.

Air travel was bad enough in the Soviet Union, with frequent delays, grimy airports and inedible food the standard fare on most journeys. But recently there had been an improvement in safety. Only 59 people died in air crashes in the first nine months of this year, compared to 302 in the whole of 1994. Most of the incidents occurred in the new airlines or in the former Soviet republics.

"It cannot be safer to have hundreds of airlines, rather than a smaller number of capitalised airlines," said Peter Smith, an aviation expert with the Moscow-based Kasparov Consultancy firm, which advises Russian aviation chiefs. "But the industry is improving."

Azerbaijan suffered two air disasters this week in a reminder of the problems other former Soviet republics face. On Tuesday a Tu154's engines failed shortly after take-off in the small enclave of Nakhichevan between Armenia and Turkey. Forty-nine people died and 33 were injured. The crash fits a pattern with two other Tu154 crashes this year, in Siberia and China, where the starting motor is thought to have malfunctioned.

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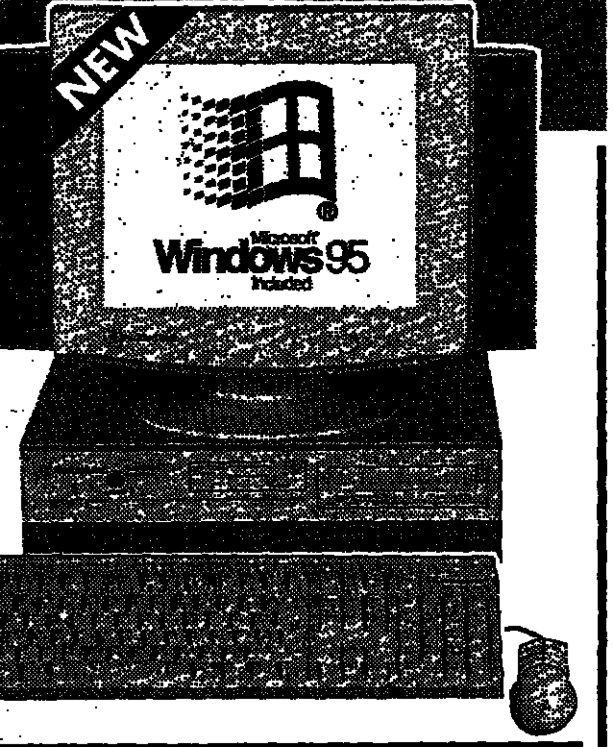

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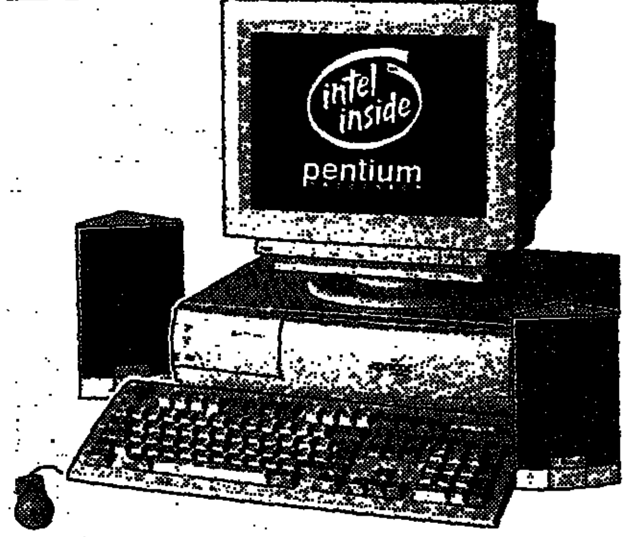

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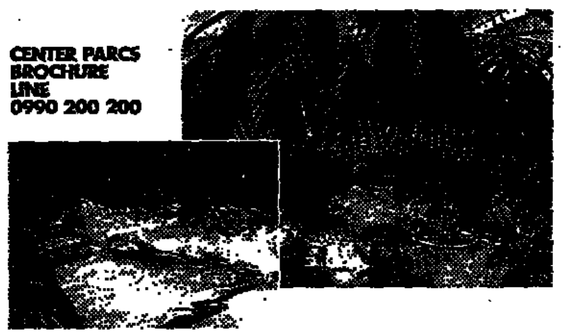

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Frailty of France heightens Kohl angst about war

The German Chancellor is increasingly haunted by the legacy of Bismarck, writes ***Roger Boyes in Baden-Baden***

IN A sign of the nervousness gripping France and Germany, Helmut Kohl said yesterday that European integration has become a matter of war and peace. This Cassandra-like attitude has become a rhetorical staple for the Chancellor: he appeals to the German fear of war as it is the only thing that out-trumps fear of losing the mark.

Yet behind the phrase, deployed in a parliamentary speech before meeting President Chirac, there is a deeper concern and real historical resonance. Herr Kohl and M Chirac are meeting on the 125th anniversary of the Franco-Prussian war which gave flesh to the expression *Erbfeindschaft* — the traditional enmity — between Germans and French.

No street names, no statues in Germany commemorate these battlefields though they represent some of Germany's greatest military victories; for 50 years it has been politically incorrect to mention the repeated defeat of the French.

German strength vis à vis French weakness, part of the geopolitics of Europe, has become an embarrassment in times of peace. During the 1968 revolt, de Gaulle disappeared across the border to Baden-Baden to seek the advice, and perhaps the military backing, of his old friend General Massu; the French leader was full of self-doubt, but returned with his confidence apparently restored, and saw off the strikes.

Then, and again in 1986, Germany could be relatively sanguine about the chaos in France. Little was demanded apart from repeated statements of trust in the French Government. A similar tone was struck by Herr Kohl yesterday, who talked of standing "shoulder to shoulder" with the French.

But 1995 is different. The mutual dependencies between France and Germany — multiplied by the single European market — mean Germany is inevitably sucked into the crisis in Paris.

There is little doubt in Bonn that European monetary union (EMU) could die on the streets of France. Yet the support that can be offered by the German Government is limited — it is not in the power of Herr Kohl to shore up the franc, allowing France to cut interest rates.

Open criticism of French nuclear testing can be muffled, common ground emphasised, but for the most part Germany is a helpless spectator of events across the border. The result is the biggest bluff of all: the publicly stated conviction that France will be able to meet the EMU entry criteria on time.

Herr Kohl's war-and-peace imagery is based on an increasingly gloomy world view. For all his talk of a glittering European future, the Chancellor has become a *Kulturpessimist*. He believes that if EMU fails because of French weakness, the German economy will end up dominating Europe within a decade.

That will sow discord. Already yesterday he was talking of "the envy and jealousy of our neighbours". Coalitions will form against Germany, there will be a return to the balance-of-power system — and perhaps to war.

When Herr Kohl speaks in this way, he does so not so much out of professional training — he is a historian — nor out of chronic German self-doubt. Rather it is because he has taken seriously the constant comparison between himself and Bismarck, the founder of the first united Germany. "Bismarck in a cardigan" is how one commentator described him, and certainly both share the fear of anti-German coalition.

In an 1882 speech to the Reichstag, Bismarck said: "The polar direction of millions of bayonets is the centre of Europe. We stand in the centre of Europe and as a result of our geographic situation and as a result of all of European history, we are the preferred targets of the coalitions of other powers."

At the time a deputy interrupted: "You are suffering from the nightmare of coalition." Bismarck replied: "This nightmare will remain a very logical one for a German minister for a long time and perhaps for ever." Soon enough Bismarck's nightmare became the fear that France would launch a "war of revenge".

The cardiganed Bismarck need not, at least, fear that. Instead he fears that the frailty of France, rather than its strength, is a real threat to Europe. "The real danger for Germany," said a senior diplomat yesterday, "is the gap between French public posturing and its true weakness."

Helmut Kohl and President Chirac toast the future of Franco-German relations in Baden-Baden yesterday

Commission urges Britain to join new pact for monetary stability

De Silguy: "EMU on track for 1999 launch

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

The European Commission aims to propose by next spring a "stability pact" for ensuring monetary discipline among all 15 European Union members and wants Britain to take part, according to Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs.

The Commission is seeking to link a version of the controversial plan, promoted by Germany, for ensuring stability inside monetary union with its own scheme for a new system binding European monetary union (EMU) members with EU states that do not join, M de Silguy added. In Italy on Wednesday, John Major rejected the idea of Britain joining any new currency mechanism. "It is in the interest of the British not to have currencies fluctuate," M de Silguy told *The Times*. "It will be up to them to decide. We will not impose anything, but on the face of it I do not see any British interest in not playing for monetary stability."

Britain could not escape the consequences of EMU. "Even if they stay on the outside, it will have an effect on them and it is up to them to measure the elements." The Commission would produce its scheme by Easter.

In a wide-ranging interview, M de Silguy also accused critics in Britain, France and Germany of distorting the nature of the project for domestic reasons. EMU was on track: at least eight members were likely to qualify and there was no reason to consider delaying the scheduled launch of the single currency on January 1, 1999. A former adviser to Jacques Chirac when he was French Prime Minister in the 1980s, M de Silguy said that the unrest in France was no source of alarm. "For us in Brussels, there is not the slightest doubt about the credibility of the policy followed by the French Government."

The Commission's stability scheme is an attempt to head off the disruption that Mr Major and other leaders foresee if monetary union goes ahead with only a few states.

President Chirac wants to tie non-members into some system to avoid "competitive devaluations" by Britain and others which would penalise EMU members. Mr Major says that the likely upheaval is cause for considering a delay and will call on fellow leaders at the Madrid summit next week to order a study. Federal-minded officials see this as sabotage.

Germany has upset most of the others by proposing fierce fines on states that run up budget deficits beyond the tight criteria laid down at Maastricht. Such a pact would make no sense if it engaged only a handful of members, M de Silguy said. Any new "notice for applying Maastricht" would have to encompass countries in and outside EMU. "You cannot have a pact of budgetary stability if at the same time we do not have a monetary stability pact."

M de Silguy struck his habitual optimistic tone despite a tough autumn. Signs of German cold feet, French upheaval and the hostility of British Euro-sceptics have made for new uncertainty. He said with a smile that he had never heard of Bernard Connolly, the British EC official who has been suspended for denouncing EMU in his book *The Rotten Heart of Europe*.

M de Silguy, 47, acknowledged that his task was to champion EMU, but said he was not guilty of "naivety or excessive optimism". His job was to encourage the countries making an effort to win membership. "It would be so much easier to pull out figures and say, 'Well, since there is some uncertainty I wonder if things are very sure'," he said.

In Madrid, the EU leaders would clear the three points blocking a final countdown to the single currency, he added. These are: the choice of a name, the precise date in early 1998 at which the members are to be decided and the matter of whether government bonds should be denominated in the single currency from the moment of its launch.

WORLD SUMMARY

Mubarak party wins landslide

Final results gave the ruling National Democratic Party headed by President Mubarak a predictably sweeping victory in Egyptian elections overshadowed by 15 deaths and allegations of rampant vote-rigging (Christopher Walker writes).

"From the start, the whole thing was ridiculous," said Ibrahim Abaza, deputy secretary-general of the liberal Wafd, the main opposition party, which won only six of the 444 seats.

The ruling party won 317 seats. Independents, many of whom support the Government, won 114 seats.

Military linked to bomb attack

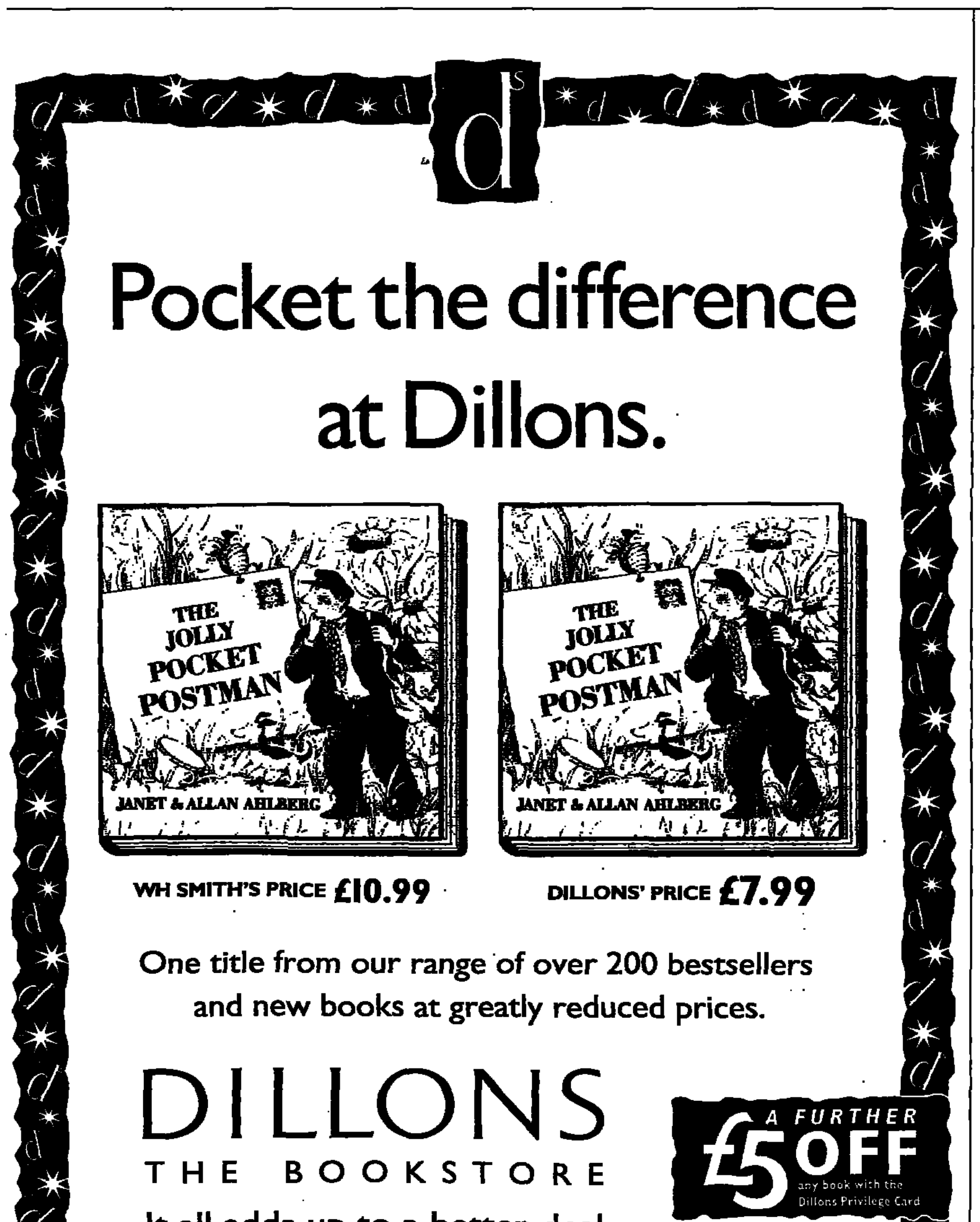
The Argentine judicial inquiry into the bombing last year of a Jewish community building in Buenos Aires, which killed 86 people, has found evidence that the attack was carried out by right-wing military officers rather than Muslim fundamentalists (Gabriella Gamini writes). Judge Juan José Galeano, heading the investigation, has ordered the arrest of 15 suspects.

Interview for OJ Simpson

Los Angeles: O. J. Simpson, the former American footballer, has promised his first full-length interview since his double-murder acquittal to Greta van Susteren, of Cable News Network (Giles Whittell writes). Mr Simpson, whose legal bills are estimated at $6 million (£3.9 million), is also reported to be planning to release a video that could earn him $10 million.

Vigilante leads Nablus march

Nablus: Ahmed Tabouk, head of a feared Palestinian vigilante gang, led his armed men in a march in this West Bank town, firing into the air to disprove Israeli radio reports that he had been seriously wounded. Israeli troops responded with teargas. *(AP)*



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Juppé cancels trip to Franco-German summit and appoints mediator for railway dispute

Unions keep up strike pressure but hint at talks

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

ALAIN JUPPÉ, the French Prime Minister, cancelled plans to attend the Franco-German summit yesterday as France faced a fresh rash of strikes and demonstrations.

In an attempt to find a way out of the conflict with striking railway workers, the Government designated Jean Mattéoli, the widely-respected president of the consultative Economic and Social Council, to act as a mediator on the question of overhauling the state-owned rail network.

Jacques Barrot, the Social Affairs Minister, invited the unions to a series of meetings on social security reforms beginning on Saturday, but their leaders replied with calls for more and bigger strikes.

The two-week transport strike spread to airline staff yesterday as public sector workers took to the streets once again to protest at M Juppé's planned overhaul of the indebted welfare system.

The turnout in Paris was small compared with recent shows of force, but elsewhere in France some rallies were the biggest since 1968: more than 40,000 people in Toulouse, 35,000 in Bordeaux, and 30,000 in Marseilles. Scuffles erupted between riot police and youths in several cities, but violence was limited.

The Government conceded that the public sector strike was expanding. On Tuesday, just 10 per cent of the country's 2.2 million civil servants answered a strike call, while the proportion of strikers yesterday had climbed to 36.7 per cent. The strike has not spread with any force to the private sector, however, despite repeated calls from union leaders.

The franc strengthened and the stock market rose yesterday as financial markets showed renewed confidence in the Government's ability to ride out the storm. The Bank of France yesterday reduced one of its key interest rates, as a third of its staff went on strike.

Marc Blondel, the head of the Force Ouvrière and one of the principal motivators of the strike, called for direct and personal negotiations with the Prime Minister rather than "consultations" with his ministers. Union leaders had insisted that the Juppé plan be withdrawn, but the new emphasis on "negotiations" — a word the Prime Minister has refused to utter — may be a sign that they are also increasingly anxious to find a way out.

For the first time M Blondel has talked of an end to the protest. "A good strike is a strike that does not last, and which produces something," he said.

M Barrot said it was "not inconceivable" that M Juppé might agree to a personal meeting with strike leaders, but other ministers echoed M Juppé's insistence that while the door is open to "discussion" on such critical issues as pension benefits, the Government would not back down from its determined stand to reform welfare and reduce deficits in order to meet the timetable for European monetary union.

Riot police confront stone-throwing miners yesterday in Freyming-Merlebach, northeast France. Several officers and protesters were injured

Air traffic controllers began a 24-hour strike yesterday, and Orly airport, outside Paris, was closed briefly as police used teargas to disperse protesters attempting to block runways. Cabin staff at Air France and the domestic Air Inter carrier also began a one-day strike.

Protesting miners, demanding increased pay and welfare benefits, clashed with riot police in the northeastern town of Freyming-Merlebach, leaving several protesters and police injured. Nearly 50 per cent of teachers and other education workers stopped work yesterday, closing thousands of schools.

A third of all telephone company employees were also on strike, along with many postal, gas and electricity workers, and local government staff. National student unions called for a continuation of the strike, but students at several striking universities have now voted to return to classes.

Nicole Notat, the head of the moderate CFDT, France's largest union, bluntly declared yesterday that "there are no longer reasons to strike". While Paris was still saturated with rush-hour traffic jams yesterday, there are signs that the alternative transport laid on by the Government is slowly reducing the chaos.

Parisians are at last starting to adapt to life without trains, the Metro and bus services.

Europe's young eager to join 'historic' protest

BY BEN MACINTYRE AND OLIVER AUGUST

A TINY contingent of British supporters stood in awe in the Latin Quarter of Paris yesterday as thousands of French strikers filed past, waving lighted torches, setting off fire crackers and demanding the resignation of Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister.

"We came over to show solidarity with our French comrades," said Vicky Morris, one of four representatives of the Welfare State Network, which is dedicated, in her words, "to defending all aspects of the welfare state, even in France".

Gordon Campbell, a student from Barnet, north London, decided on the spur of the moment to spend his university holidays in Paris. "When you read about the rioting of 1789 or 1968, you think, gosh, I wish I had been there. I am not one for climbing onto barricades but at least this time, I was there."

Students from other parts of Europe also joined their Parisian counterparts in the demonstrations they hoped would be reminiscent of the historic 1968 student riots.

The German gang came to the French capital with plenty of experience in street fighting. During the 1980s Germany was repeatedly shaken by outbreaks of left-wing violence. Holger Strathmann, a veteran of the street battles fought in protest against nuclear power, and his friend, Jörg Köster, have no romantic notions of seeing history in the making. "Hamburg or Paris, it's the same capitalist system we are fighting," Herr Strathmann said. "We cannot allow the elites do what they want. And we are not afraid of the French riot police."

Also in Paris was a group of students from Maastricht, the Belgian city where the treaty on European monetary union was signed, and which, some commentators say, is the real reason behind the French Government's tough stance.

The British contingent — a student, a printer, a teacher and a housewife — arrived on Wednesday night. Its first experience of the French transport strike was not a pleasant one. "We had to walk from the airport to Gare du Nord. It took five hours. It was freezing," Ms Morris said.

For the second time in a week, students and public sector workers joined forces to march through Paris, tying up the already impossible traffic and bringing fresh pressure to bear on the Government.

More than 30,000 demonstrators took to the Paris streets on Tuesday; not much more than half that number were out in protest on the Left Bank yesterday, in a demonstration limited to the Paris area and not including the suburbs. But while the protest was smaller, it was also angrier.

"We've got to stop this Juppé and we will," said one student as he pushed a wheelchair with a tottering metal gibbet from which an effigy of the Prime Minister dangled. "This is bigger than '68," he said, referring to the student-worker riots that took place, on a rough calculation, ten years before he was born.

> ‘Hamburg or Paris, it's the same capitalist system we are fighting’

The students in the streets yesterday are a far cry from their rebellious forebears of '68. While the talk may be of bringing down the Government, their concerns are more economic than ideological.

"I want to get a good job and I want a good education, and if we don't get more teachers and classrooms I won't get either," said François Millat, a student at Paris university.

As tension mounts in the standoff between the Government and unions, the strikers are falling into a routine. Street vendors bring mobile kitchens to ward off the marchers' hunger in the intense cold, the banners carry familiar messages and the strike leaders are well rehearsed as they lead the chanting from public address systems mounted on cars.

As the march dispersed, two students held up a banner declaring "Juppéthon: we have more than two million in the streets" — a reference to M Juppé's earlier remark that if that number came out in protest, his Government would resign.

RUSSIAN ELECTIONS

On December 17, 1995 there will be elections in the Russian Federation to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly.

Russian citizens visiting Britain or permanently resident here have the right to participate. Voting will take place at the Embassy of the Russian Federation, 15 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8 4QX (tel: 0171-229-3628); at the Trade Delegation, 32 Highgate West Hill, London N6 6NL (tel: 0181-340-1907) and at the Russian Consulate General, 58 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7HL (tel: 0131-225-7098), from 8.00 a.m. till 10 p.m.

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Tigers reject offer of amnesty and seek new fighters

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN BATTICALOA

THE Tamil Tigers' rejection of an amnesty by the Sri Lankan Government was followed yesterday by the appearance of thousands of posters in Tiger-controlled areas, urging boys of 14 and over to join the war. The rebels plan to intensify the 12-year uprising with a nationwide guerrilla campaign. Colombo, the capital, will be a primary target.

The Government's euphoria at humiliating the rebels by forcing them out of Jaffna City, their stronghold for five years, may be short-lived. With no citadel left to protect, the fighters are free to concentrate on what made them famous: terrorism. Far from bringing peace, the seizure of Jaffna may escalate the war.

The Government is in danger of sliding into greater political, military and economic confusion. The Sinhalese-dominated National Assembly is certain to attack devolution proposals by President Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, which were meant to give Tamils virtual sovereignty in the North and East.

This will further isolate the 2.5 million Tamils, 12 per cent of the population. They have already been hurt by the fall of the traditional centre of Tamil culture and learning, and many feel defeated and humiliated. A broken presidential promise would bring a sense of betrayal.

The Government has no clear answer about what to do next, although it knows it cannot secure the two thirds majority in the National Assembly necessary to approve Mrs Kumaratunga's devolution plan.

There will be grave military consequences for taking Jaffna. The 100,000-strong army is recruiting 10,000 more men to defend the city and pursue the Tigers in their new hideouts. The economic cost of the war, already more than £650,000 a day, will escalate.

Jaffna is a ghost town: there is no one there to govern. Many view the Sinhalese army as an occupation force in what was a de facto Tamil homeland. If civilians do not return in large numbers the Government will have achieved nothing of any importance, save for forcing the Tigers to move from one place to another and denying them their parallel government. If civilians flock back, the Tigers will be a defeated force. They will do their utmost to stop that happening, if necessary by violence.

Mrs Kumaratunga: plan for devolution doomed

Moderate Tamil political parties are in a quandary. All found it necessary to dissociate themselves from the siege of Jaffna; to be seen supporting the Government that put Sinhalese soldiers in the Tamil heartland may prove an untenable political contortion. Two of the parties are members of the coalition Government, whose survival depends on them.

The capture of Jaffna has security implications for the rest of Sri Lanka. The rebels will base themselves in other parts of the Jaffna peninsula, as well as in the Eastern Province and parts of the northern mainland. While protecting their homeland they acted more like a conventional army, but now they are full-time guerrillas again. Stifling new security measures in Colombo are a sign of the fear of guerrilla attacks. Tourists will stay away, hurting the economy.

The victory in Jaffna City may have far-reaching consequences. The two communities may be further divided; war costs will soar; the President's credibility may suffer; and terrorism will escalate.

The Government is trying to reassure Tamils that they are safe, in the hope of enticing them away from the protection of the Tigers. So far, so good. But Mrs Kumaratunga's reassurances are unlikely to overcome the legacy of fear left by recent history, in particular the 1983 anti-Tamil riots. Tamils are fearful: the promises of a Sinhalese President have done nothing to ease that fear.

Galileo set for Jupiter orbit

BY ANJANA AHUJA

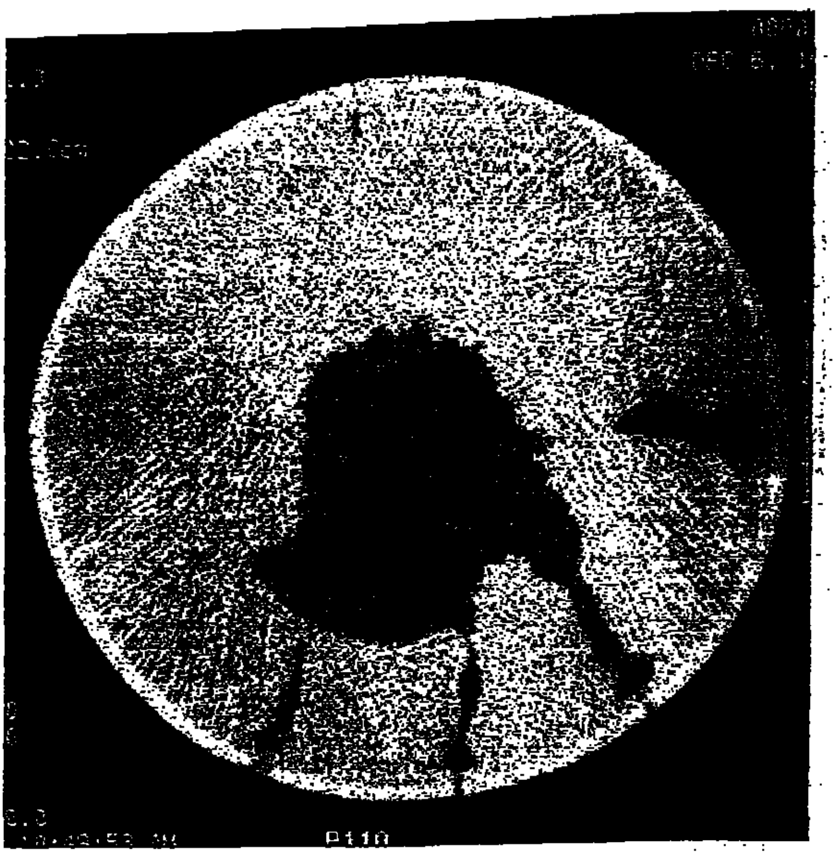
THE Galileo spacecraft was being manoeuvred into orbit around Jupiter last night, spelling an end to its troubled six-year voyage to the planet.

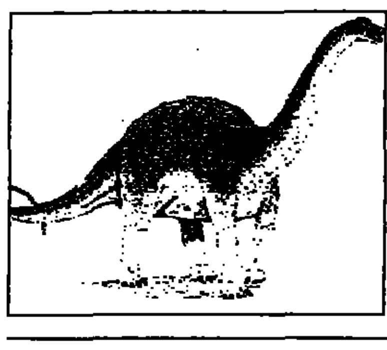
Simultaneously, a probe released from the spacecraft last July also made its descent into the gaseous planet, becoming the first visitor to drop into any of the giant gas planets which orbit the far reaches of the solar system.

Mission controllers were awaiting news of the two events yesterday. "We're on the edge of our seats because both probe entry and engine firing (part of the orbit manoeuvre) are crucial," said Franklin O'Donnell, at the mission control centre in the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Pasadena, California.

Others were more relaxed. "I would be surprised if nothing worked but also surprised if everything worked perfectly," admitted Professor Fred Taylor from Oxford University, who has been involved in the mission for 20 years.

Galileo mission, page 18





Scientists in Miami, Florida, use a scanner, above left, to look inside a 70-million-year-old fossilised dinosaur egg. The scan revealed an embryo in the early stages of development, above right. The light areas indicate the beginning of bone development. The scientists had hoped to find a late-stage, fully developed embryo with a complete skeleton that would have helped them to understand the evolution of the Saltasaurus, left, a long-necked herbivore that roamed South America during the Cretaceous period, the last of three dinosaur eras. Dr Edward Petuch, Professor of Palaeontology at Florida Atlantic University, said: "It was a young embryo, much to our sadness. It wasn't a freshly laid egg but it was only a few weeks old." The egg, discovered about six months ago in northwestern Argentina, was completely fossilised and unhatched. Other dinosaur eggs have been found intact, but they are rare, and this was believed to be the best example of a Saltasaurus egg ever found. It was the size of a bowling ball. Dr Petuch remained confident, however. "One of the eggs they find one of these years will have a completely developed skeleton in it," he said. *(Reuter)*

Dinosaur's egg reveals embryo

Legal steps to keep US in Okinawa

Tokyo: Tomiichi Murayama, the Japanese Prime Minister, took legal action yesterday to force Okinawan landowners to renew leases on land used by the US military after failing to convince them to do so voluntarily.

Mr Murayama sued Okinawa's Governor, Masahide Ota, after he rejected Mr Murayama's recommendation on Tuesday that he sign an order forcing the landowners to renew contracts. Yesterday's suit paves the way for Mr Murayama to sign the order himself.

Okinawans' longstanding bitter feelings towards the heavy US military presence flared up following the abduction and rape of an Okinawan schoolgirl in September. Three US servicemen are currently on trial. *(AP)*

Rabin's widow uses US visit to launch career as peace envoy

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

LEAH RABIN, transformed from aloof political wife to the most influential woman in Israel, left for the United States last night to launch her new role as world ambassador for the peace policy for which her husband Yitzhak gave his life.

On Sunday, alongside Al Gore, the American Vice-President, and Shimon Peres, the new Israeli Prime Minister, she will address a rally in her husband's memory at New York's Madison Square Garden that has been criticised by American Jews as aimed at further isolating the Israeli Right. Then will come a papal audience in Rome.

Mrs Rabin, 67, has emerged from her recent blanket exposure to the media with her popularity enhanced. In recent days, there have been suggestions that she should either be given a leading role in the Labour Party for next year's general election, be appointed Ambassador to Washington, or even be nominated to succeed Ezer Weizman as President.

Before leaving for America, accompanied by daughter Dalia and son Yuval, Mrs Rabin, whose dignified composure during the 30-day traditional mourning period has led to comparisons with Jacqueline Kennedy, did not rule out the possibility of entering politics, but said it was too early to decide. "She definitely has the ingredients to be a leader in her own right," her daughter told Israel television. "She was always the optimist in the family and played a much more significant role than was attributed to her over the years."

Some officials of the Labour Party, which does not have a woman among its senior figures, are convinced that Mrs Rabin could help attract voters in the poll scheduled for next October by emphasising its commitment to her husband's legacy. "This could be significant, because in the Hebrew calendar the anniversary of his assassination will occur only three days before voting," one said.

By inviting CNN into the family home immediately after the funeral, Mrs Rabin, previously regarded by many Israelis as too snobbish and materialistic, signalled the start of a process that has turned her into a national icon.

Her moving speech to the 250,000-strong memorial rally held on the spot where her husband was shot provided evidence that she had emerged as a formidable national figure in her own right, determined to see that the policies which her husband fought for would be pursued.

True to form, she announced on the eve of her departure that she was cancelling her subscription to *Haaretz*, regarded by many as Israel's leading paper. "Both during his life and after his death, *Haaretz* unfairly criticised Yitzhak Rabin," she told army radio.

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Dictatorial rule of outsider Fujimori wins over Peru's dispossessed

Fujimori: knows that the peace is fragile

He is the obscure foreign technocrat who broke the grip on power of the white elite in Lima, and the masses love him, writes ***Janet Bush***

ALBERTO FUJIMORI, Peru's Japanese-born President, sallied forth from his palace into Lima's finest square, the Plaza de Armas. He bought a strip of lottery tickets from a street seller, tore them into ten pieces and scattered them among his delighted fans.

Later, he appeared on the balcony of the Presidential Palace, flanked by his military attachés, as worshippers shouted "Come down!" He did not oblige them at the recent Catholic festival of the Lord of the Miracles, but whipped up wild applause when he grabbed a press camera and started taking pictures of his people below.

Even in the annals of Latin American politics, the idea of a dean of agronomy becoming an arch-populist is strange. But the son of Japanese immigrants beat Mario Vargas Llosa, the novelist, to win power in 1990 and won a landslide earlier this year against Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the former United Nations Secretary-General.

It is purely because he is foreign, an obscure technocrat who broke the stranglehold on the power of the white elite, that the people, the majority of whom are of mixed Indian and Spanish blood, love him.

"I have planted 55 million trees in one year. This year, I will plant 100 million. There are no headlines. But the people know," he says.

Señor Fujimori prides himself on speaking directly to the peasants. On one of his frequent forays into the hinterland, he alarmed the US Chargé d'Affaires accompanying him when he spotted some boys swimming, stripped off and joined them. He is an unashamed autocrat, disbanding Congress in 1992 to stamp out opposition to his austerity drive which came to be known as *Fujishock* or *Thatcherismo*.

"In Peru, autocratic rule has worked. This country was a mess, on the point of collapse," he says. "How else could I have solved hyperinflation, ended economic isolation, stamped out terrorism and undertaken major structural reform in five years?"

Bringing inflation down from more than 7,000 per cent in 1990 to about 10 per cent has been a triumph and, despite the explosion in poverty, has helped make him popular. His other trump card was the arrest in 1992 of Abimael Guzmán, leader of the Maoist Shining Path terrorist group that wreaked violence in the country in the 1980s.

But President Fujimori knows that the peace is fragile. Without social stability, there can be no economic progress. The foreign investors he is relying on to rebuild the country will disappear if the troubles return. He believes that a technocrat has more chance of delivering than politicians. They do not know what it is like outside Lima's elegant boulevards, he says. He measures his success in the numbers of roads built, irrigation channels dug and books airlifted into village schools.

But his critics counter that his efforts amount to populism without substance. He has been building schools all over the country but there are few teachers. He dismisses such opposition: "We don't have much money. I give the people a symbol and inspire them to make progress themselves."

House committee orders Gingrich tax investigation

FROM *MARTIN FLETCHER* IN WASHINGTON

NEWT GINGRICH, the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, is to be investigated by an independent counsel for alleged tax law violations.

The investigation, agreed unanimously by the House Ethics Committee on Wednesday night, will last well into next year's election campaigns and compounds Mr Gingrich's increasing political problems. Only one other Speaker has been investigated by a special counsel. That was Jim Wright, a Democrat forced to resign in 1989.

Mr Gingrich was the Republican who relentlessly pushed the ethics charges against Mr Wright and in doing so became a national figure. The ethics committee also reprimanded Mr Gingrich for three breaches of House rules, dismissed three charges against him and suspended judgment on another allegation of wrongdoing.

David Bonior, the Democrats' House whip, said the committee's report confirmed that "the Speaker is in deep ethical trouble" and that his "path to power was paved with a corrupt mix of secret contributions, hidden campaign spending and political payoffs to multimillionaire donors". Mr Gingrich's office interpreted the report entirely differently, calling it an exoneration. The special counsel would be investigating only one "narrow point" and the Speaker was confident the charge would be dismissed.

The counsel will investigate whether Mr Gingrich illegally used tax-deductible contributions to finance an overtly partisan college course he taught and beamed by satellite to campuses. The committee found "reason to believe" that he may have done. If the counsel upholds the charge, the full House would have to decide on disciplinary action ranging from a reprimand to expulsion.

The ten-member committee also rebuked the Speaker for accepting a $4.5 million (£2.9 million) book contract from HarperCollins soon after his election. The publishing company is a subsidiary of News America, the US arm of The News Corporation, whose British arm, News International, owns *The Times*. Mr Gingrich's involvement came as its Fox television arm was pressing for deregulation of the US broadcasting industry.

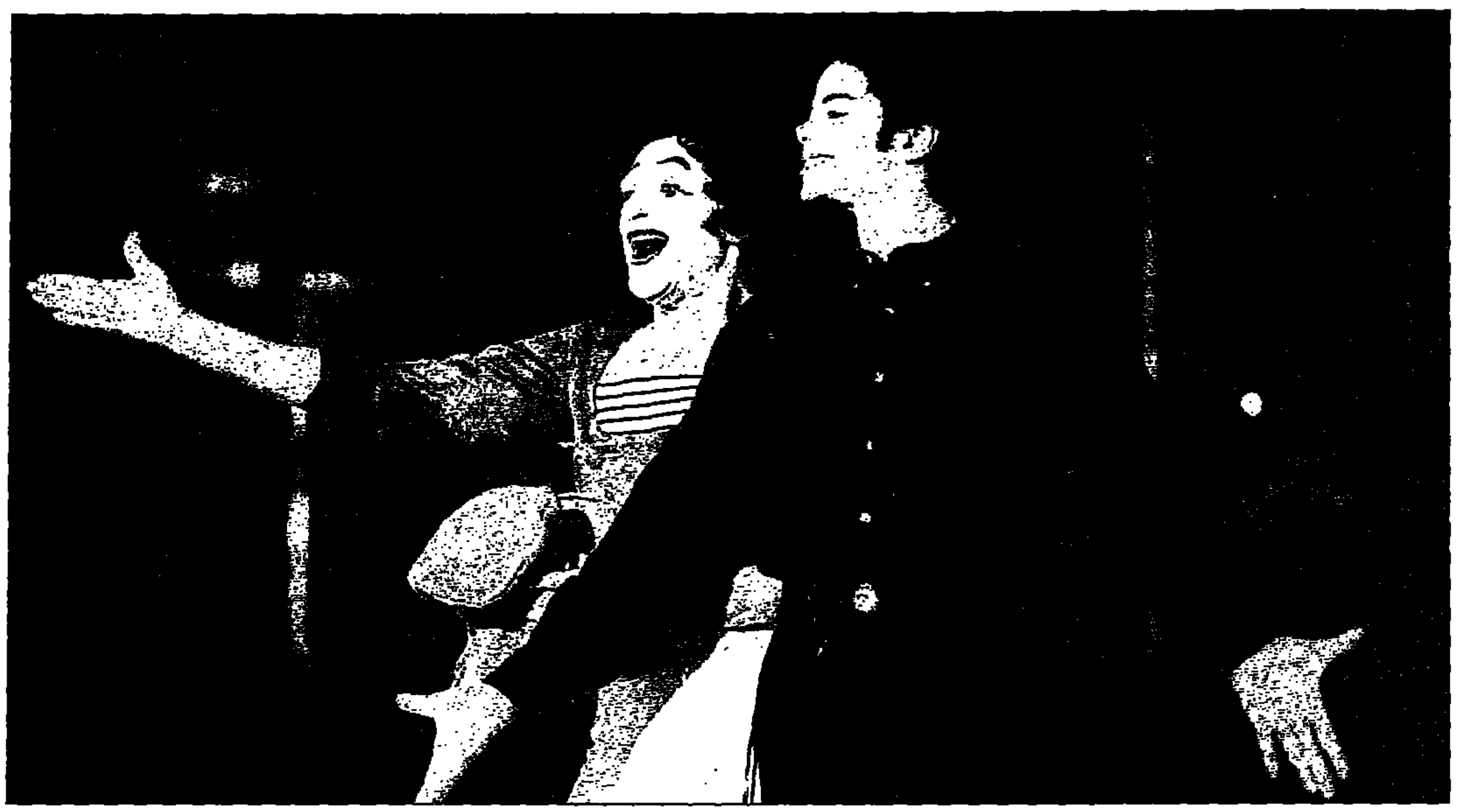
Although the contract was in "technical compliance" with House rules and Mr Gingrich later dropped it, the committee concluded that "at a minimum this creates the impression of exploiting one's office for personal gain. Such a perception is especially troubling when it pertains to the office of the Speaker, a constitutional office requiring the highest standards of ethical behaviour".

Clinton budget offer

Washington: President Clinton yesterday sent Congress a third budget plan in an attempt to break a deadlock that threatens to shut down the Government next week for the second time in two months (Martin Fletcher writes).

A day after vetoing a draconian Republican Bill to balance the budget in seven years, Mr Clinton unveiled his counter-proposal. It began to close the gap, and Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, called it "a start". Leon Panetta, the White House Chief of Staff, said there was "not a lot of negotiating room".

Mr Clinton's new plan proposes cuts of $178 billion (£114 billion) in projected spending on health insurance programmes for the poor and elderly instead of the $433 billion the Republicans would cut. It would offer $98 billion in tax cuts, instead of the Republicans' $245 billion, and would end various corporate tax breaks and make deeper cuts in welfare, transport and housing than Mr Clinton proposed last June.


Michael Jackson rehearsing for a television show at a New York theatre with the mime artist, Marcel Marceau. The singer later collapsed

Jackson remains in intensive care after collapse

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK

PARAMEDICS who treated Michael Jackson after the singer's collapse at a New York theatre described how they were greeted by the sight of his "melting make-up". Kevin Barwick, an ambulanceman, said he had to lift Jackson's shirt to check his pallor as it was impossible to tell from his caked face.

Jackson, 37, was yesterday detained in intensive care, where he is expected to remain for another day. Aides claimed that his condition was not life-threatening. He was suffering from persistent low blood pressure which contributed to his collapse on stage at the Beacon Theatre on Broadway.

Jackson's personal doctor arrived in New York from Los Angeles, his mother Katherine visited him in hospital, and nurses at the Beth Israel Medical Centre sought to overcome their excitement at having such a celebrity for a patient. The arrival of a shadowy figure at one of the hospital entrances sparked reports that he was also visited by his wife, Lisa Marie Presley. Earlier she was said to be in a distant part of the United States, tending to business.

One of Jackson's bodyguards said the singer was tired after rehearsals, at which he had arrived with his trademark anti-germ facemask. At the time of his collapse he was rehearsing for a one-off television show with Marcel Marceau, the mime artist. The promoters announced yesterday that the show had been indefinitely postponed.

The illness is the latest in a series of melodramatic incidents in a strange and sometimes unhappy life. In January 1984, Jackson suffered scalp burns when his hair caught fire during the filming of a commercial. Six years later, he was admitted to hospital with chest pains, a complaint allegedly caused by his energetic dancing style. Accusations of child molestation led to migraines and an addiction to painkillers.

Jackson's sister, Janet, arriving at the hospital

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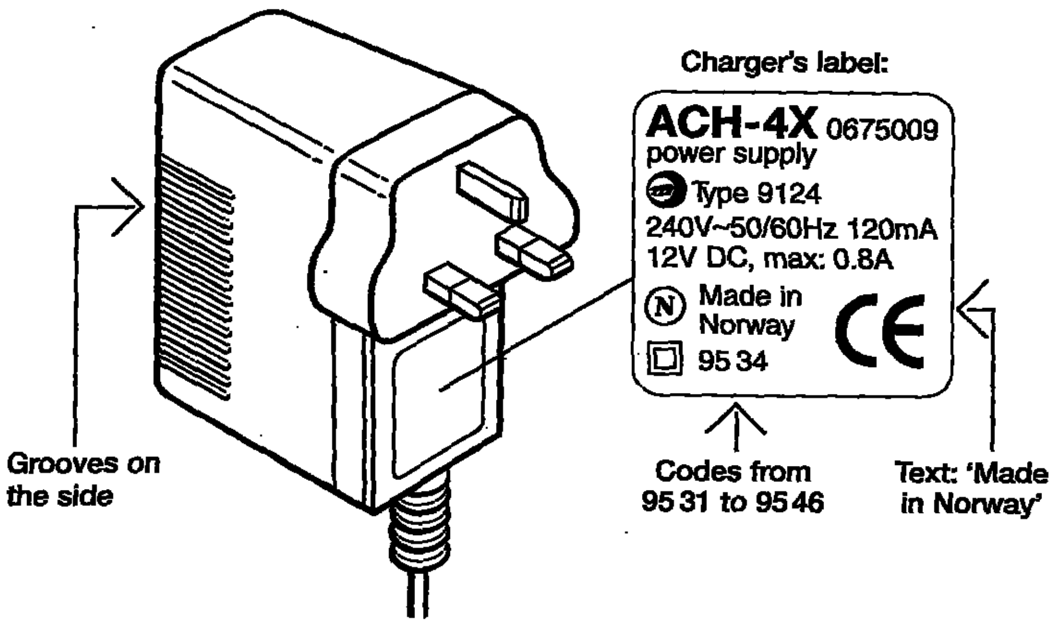

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KATZ

Old Labour: even as a union activist, John Prescott had ambitions to get to Oxford

The man who reaches the parts Tony Blair can't ...

John Prescott, the Labour Party's latest sex symbol, reveals his penchants for jiving and diving during a nightmare journey to Brussels

I am writing a prose poem about the nightmare I shared with John Prescott. It ends, like Ms Adcock's now famous poem, with a kiss for Mr Prescott — on the bleak forecourt of a horrible hotel in Brussels, at 1am yesterday.

You may imagine that senior MPs travel in cushioned limousines. But the former Shadow Transport Secretary (bound for the Socialist International), his office chief, Rosie, and I set off for Brussels by rush-hour Tube to Heathrow, standing all the way. Having arrived just in time, we were told the flight was delayed. And there was another little local difficulty: Labour chairman Diana Jeuda materialised, Brussels-bound — she had lost her passport and wallet and would have to cling to Prescott to help get her through... Mr Prescott's face was a picture.

When we finally boarded the last British Midland flight shortly before 10pm — the aircraft packed, no storage room left for our bags and absolutely no room for feet — we were confronted by a pile of the only newspaper available, the *Daily Express*, with its front page blazoning, "The strange allure of John Prescott". Mr Prescott became an erupting volcano. New Labour's newest sex symbol was now in no mood to read it thank you. He had had quite enough of that bloody poem.

He had, he yelled over the roar of the engines, had to look up what "protuberances" meant. (He was referring to Ms Adcock's vivid description of the kiss she and he had shared in her dream — "*our eyes had locked/and we were leaning avidly forward/lips out-thrust, certain protuberances/under our clothing brushing each other's fronts...*")

Crushed alongside me with less space than on a bus, Prescott fulminated: "The airlines get away with murder. If this was a state airline," he said menacingly, "we'd all be bloody laffin' at the incompetence."

> 'If he loves you, it's 100 per cent; if he doesn't, it's 150 per cent'

However, we all cheered when supper arrived just as we were thinking of breakfast, and Prescott relaxed enough to enjoy his new-found irresistibility. We read Melanie McDonagh's thoughts on John Prescott in the *Evening Standard* which concluded: "I have lunched in the past with both Mr Blair and Mr Prescott. And so far as fanciability goes, Mr Prescott is well ahead of the leader."

Mr Prescott humphed. Well, nobody really minds being called fanciable. But who was the woman colleague McDonagh says described him as "macho and insecure with women"? "Huh, I always wondered what Harriet Harman thought of me." (A jest).

He plucked out a feminist credential. "I've read *The Women's Room*" (Marilyn French's novel) "and I was very struck by it. By how despairing and frustrating it must be for women who couldn't do what they wanted because of their circumstances."

Our long evening together had begun at a Christmas party arranged for the One Thousand Club: a select group of those who come to the aid of the Labour Party with handsome cheques. Mr Prescott, pressed for time, had to speak when only a fraction of the 200 guests had managed to plough through the snow. Jack Cunningham asked us to "doughnut" the rostrum of the cavernous hall. "John Prescott is a man who, if he loves you, he loves you 100 per cent," he said. "But by God, if he doesn't love you he doesn't love you 150 per cent."

Thus threateningly introduced, the pugnacious Mr P took the microphone to announce that people were now joining Labour in droves. But he also fulminated about how much more publicity "a woman's fantasy poem" had received, than his speech in the Budget debate — when Michael Heseltine had insisted on reading out the whole poem on the floor of the House.

This was a tactical error by Hezza, in Prescott's view, that went down like a lead balloon. "He could have made a quick remark about Labour women having a peculiar idea of sexual charms — but he would read out the whole poem just so he could get to the line about protuberances. Well, (a) the women in the House didn't like that, and (b) it was a Budget debate, for heaven's sake, and he is the Deputy Prime Minister. It showed a lack of judgment. John Major got it right — he just said in passing, 'That was a strange story, eh John?'"

Mr Prescott, chippy northerner by temperament, has much to put up with. Nicholas Soames's "Another gin and tonic, Giovanni!", referring to Prescott's former life as a waiter on passenger liners, has worn a bit thin but he would like to kick Matthew Parris for his recent sketch which mercilessly mocked the lack of syntax in Prescott's Budget speech.

"I know it's a deficiency," he said. "I don't have a command of grammar. But I've told him before — at least I can always be bloody understood."

When a poet's muse arrives in a dream as a living person, should permission be asked before publication? Wendy Cope requested Kingsley Amis's imprimatur before publishing her first slim volume, *Making Cocoa for Kingsley Amis* — a line which came to her, too, in a dream. Amis was rather chuffed about it — because he thought her stuff was good: it rhymed, it scanned. "She might never have heard of Ezra Pound," he remarked approvingly.

Mr Prescott is not much of a man for poetry, but he can see that in the counterpoint of form and freestyle, the rules apply as in jazz, which he does know about. While at Hull reading economics, he encountered Philip Larkin, then Hull's librarian. "Excuse me, do you hold any seminars on your poetry?" he asked. But Larkin brushed him aside.

However, he told me of several unaccustomed cultural experiences he'd had lately. He had been to the ballet for the first time in his life — *The Nutcracker* at Birmingham — "very much like Old Labour, the rats coming out of the fireplace" — and recently in Australia he went to Sydney Opera House to see *Carmen*, which he slept through, irritated by the surtitles. "Don't like foreign films with subtitles either," he said. The best thing was last Sunday evening at the American Ambassador's: he had met the great Dave Brubeck, now aged 75.

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW

As macho men go — he has to shave thrice a day — Prescott is pretty unreconstructed. He can jive (with his chic wife Pauline, on stage at the party conference.) And he can dive. Deep-sea diving has built him a 43in chest: he learned from *Reader's Digest* how pearl fishers hold air in their lungs, and can swim 80 yards underwater: he dived onto the Mary Rose and was about to dive off the Great Barrier Reef recently, when summoned home for the Nolan debate.

And he is far from insecure with women. Wary, perhaps. But by the end of our ghastly journey he was making deadpan remarks about Ms Adcock's name and trying on my hat — "Did you get this in Holland?" (a Dutch cap joke).

His life is run by the capable Rosie, aged 37, the daughter of a Doncaster councillor: organiser of schedules, arbiter of what capers John should or should not agree to. It was Rosie who decreed he should *not* go on *Have I Got News For You*, for instance — "just a vehicle for being got at by clever-arses".

Rosie had been besieged all day by hacks for a comment on her boss's sexiness. She had fobbed them off. As for his constituency secretary up in Hull, she thought the poem was "mucky".

Prescott personifies Old Labour made New. From seamen's union activism on passenger liners, he conceived the ambition to get to Ruskin, via a Workers' Educational Authority summer school and correspondence courses. Being told that his first essay was no good made him all the more bloodyminded. Then he had a row with the union secretary and lost his NUS scholarship: instead he applied to Chester's Tory education committee for a grant, declaring he wanted to become a teacher. He got the grant but lost the place at Ruskin. So he joined a cruise liner, the *Andes*, until sacked for union activities.

Luckily, someone failed to show at Ruskin. "Ruskin, which was an exhilarating and intellectually stimulating place under the late Billy Hughes, was full of shop stewards who'd been big-fish in small ponds, and couldn't take it" — so Prescott got to Oxford at 24.

By 1969, newly adopted by Hull East, he was inside No. 10 for beer-and-sandwiches with Harold Wilson and NUS comrades. Wilson related his plans for getting the Merchant Shipping Act amended in the Lords. "How do you know you'll be in power?" asked Prescott. Wilson sucked on his pipe. "I don't envisage my plans being upset," he replied complacently. Labour, 17 points ahead at that time, were out within months.

Of Tony Blair, whom he refers to as TB, Prescott says laconically: "We're different characters. We represent different parts of the party: each of us reaches the parts the other can't reach."

When we finally reached Brussels airport after midnight, reedy piped music was playing "What now, my love?" Mr Prescott looked bleary; his eyes bloodshot. Some effing and blinding ensued when the taxi queue, in the black cold night, was about a mile long. Why didn't Rosie and I wait inside while he stood in the queue? We demurred. So he said briskly that he would bloody well go inside himself — and did. Finally, outside his hotel, came the farewell kiss: nothing like Fleur Adcock's, I must add — but once in my own hotel, I dreamed fitfully of John Prescott.

He should thank Ms Adcock. It's better to be in dreams than in nightmares.

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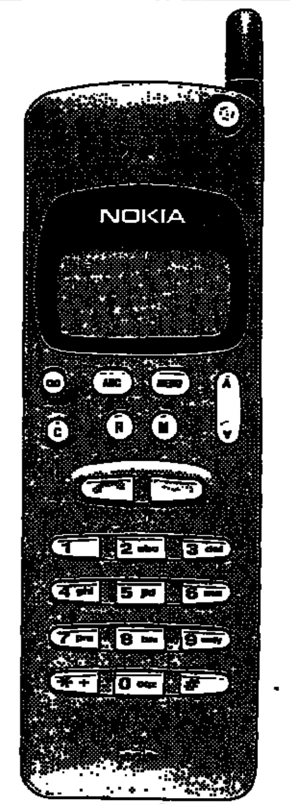

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Beyond the veil

Rachael Tapsell talks to **Eve-Ann Prentice** about the practical problems and unexpected humiliation she experienced wearing the Islamic veil

CHRIS HARRIS

Rachael Tapsell had to wear a burqa to work as a nurse in Afghanistan: "When you wear the veil, it is as though you have ceased to exist. People do not look at you or acknowledge you"

THE IDEA OF having to cover your face whenever you are in public is one which is totally alien to Western women. Yet that is exactly what I had to do when I spent five months working as a nurse in Afghanistan.

There was no option: if I wanted to work there I had to wear the burqa, an all-enveloping veil which not only obscured my face but, as time wore on, had a horribly isolating effect on my personality.

I had travelled to Kandahar as part of a team sent by the British medical aid agency, Merlin. Just being there was something of a triumph: I was the first Western woman allowed into the area by the Islamic group which took control of the region last October.

Until my arrival, it had been impossible for the British team to treat Afghan women. The Islamic authorities ban women from being treated by male doctors, while at the same time forbidding women to train as health workers.

It was quite an achievement, then, for them to agree that I could work there as a nurse. They only did so on condition that I wear the burqa in public at all times.

Burqas are made of a sort of nylon fabric and are usually grey, black or, as mine was, green. They are also very expensive by Afghan standards — mine cost 55,000 Afghanis (£11), an enormous outlay when you consider that the average salary is a mere 40,000 Afghanis a month. As a result, two or three families often share the same one, and since women are not allowed out of their homes unless they are wearing a burqa, this means that the majority of women spend most of their time indoors.

But although the Afghan women did not have to wear the veil unless they went out, if there were men in the house, they had to hide in the kitchen. I used to see them peeking from behind the door.

During my five months there, I never got used to the burqa. For Western women used to being able to wear anything they like, the restrictions it places upon you are at best disorienting, at worst frightening.

From a purely practical point of view, the burqa makes even the simplest tasks difficult. It is like wearing a snorkel, only worse. You have tunnel vision, and what you can see is hazy, obscured by the criss-cross mesh of the material.

As the streets in Kandahar are rubble-strewn and the burqa is astonishingly voluminous, I found myself constantly tripping up. My shins were permanently bruised but this was a small price to pay compared to the fate of many Afghan women, who are often knocked down by cars because they cannot see.

Wearing it indoors was almost as bad: when I was working at the hospital at Kandahar, I often ended up dragging chairs across the floor, their legs caught in my burqa's ballooning folds.

Afghan women are used to the restrictions placed upon them by the veil, because they have to begin wearing it as soon as they reach puberty. But they defy the Islamic laws by wearing make-up, stilettos and glitzy clothes underneath.

However, the burqa does have some advantages, chiefly offering women protection. Kandahar is ruled by an Islamic faction known as the Taliban, which enforces wearing the veil, but when it was under the control of the Mujahidin, women who did not wear a burqa were often kidnapped and taken into the hills to look after wounded fighters. After the Taliban took over, we heard about one of our team who was beaten for having her face uncovered.

For me, it was very difficult. My job meant I was out far more than the local women, and therefore I had to wear a burqa far more frequently. But I did insist on having my face uncovered when I had to negotiate with the Taliban, for example at meetings when I was persuading them to focus on female and child health. They agreed I could take the veil off, but would always remind me to cover my face when I left.

Rachael today back in Britain

Matters came to a head when my translator and I were seen in our Jeep without our burqas on properly. I was sent a letter which said my translator would have to leave immediately and that I would be barred in future if I didn't obey the rules. I was furious, and told the authorities I was trying to run a medical programme and had done my best. At first, the mullah denied writing the letter but then he not only admitted it, he apologised, which was astounding. After that, the Taliban decided Western women did not have to wear the veil, and from May this year the rules have been lifted.

The Merlin nurses who are now carrying on the work in Kandahar are being treated much more leniently by the authorities. I think they were testing me and their stereotype of a Western woman.

I am delighted that the women who followed me have escaped the veil, because although the physical restrictions were frustrating, what was far more ominous was its psychological effect.

When you wear the veil, it is as though you have ceased to exist. People do not look at you or acknowledge you. I don't consider myself to be neurotic, but there were times when I could only express emotions by crying behind the veil. There was no other outlet. I couldn't go for a swim or even a brisk walk.

What I remember most is the feeling of frustration and isolation it caused. I became very withdrawn when I wore it. After five months I felt I was becoming confused and irrational.

By the time I left I had grown to hate the veil. It became dirty and torn in the dusty, shell-holed streets, but I didn't want to waste the time or the cotton in mending it. But the other women pressed me, so I did, out of respect for them.

I brought my burqa back with me and every so often I look at it with loathing, although I accept that it was part of a culture that I had to work within. For me, it was an ordeal which lasted just five months; for the Afghan women, it is a fact of life, and they will always have my sympathy.

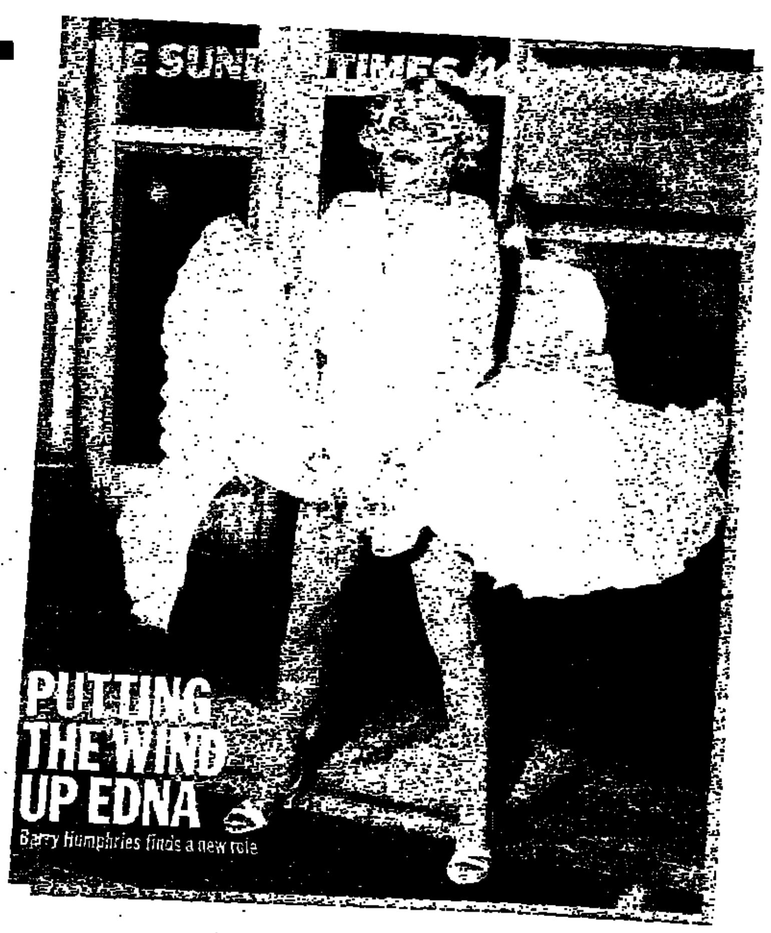
- *Merlin is based at 1a Rede Place, London W2 4TU.*

THE SUNDAY TIMES

A NOVEL TWIST

"I thought it might be clever to suggest that the story was really a thinly disguised autobiography ..."

Barry Humphries on his first novel – about an Australian man who becomes a household name playing an outrageous woman



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No one has a right to asylum

Bruce Anderson says Britain must toughen up on immigration

Already the criticism is *fortissimo*, and the volume is still rising. Opponents of the Government would have us believe that its proposals to tighten the procedures on the seeking of political asylum in this country are plumbing the depths of racist barbarity.

The problem with this hysteria is that it has had an impact. The accusations have deterred ministers from the hard thinking which is essential if the problem of asylum-seekers is to be solved rather than palliated. The Bill which Michael Howard will present to the Commons on Monday is not nearly radical enough.

Political asylum is a 19th-century idea, pre-dating modern communications, air travel and welfare benefits. It assumed that a few heroic individuals who had wrestled unsuccessfully with tyranny would reach these shores, and that posterity would vindicate the decision to admit them.

We live in a less heroic and more complex world. At a guess, at least 100 million people would now meet the Geneva Convention criteria for asylum, having a well-grounded fear of persecution by reason of race, religion or nationality. The nationality criterion would apply to any one of the inhabitants of those numerous countries which are little better than slums run by thugs.

> The sheer number of deserving cases is too great

Let us not deceive ourselves; these 100 million are all deserving cases. They are men, women and children like ourselves, with the same divine spark, fully entitled to a proper ration of human dignity, fully worthy of our compassion when they are denied it. But there is nothing we can do to help them. We are not prepared to wreck our own way of life to relieve their sufferings, and it is sentimental nonsense to pretend otherwise. By subscribing to the Geneva Convention, we are agreeing to a commitment which we have neither the intention nor the means to honour. So let us clear both our minds and our international obligations of cant, and find a new basis for asylum policy.

There is only one. Confronted by the legion of potential applicants, we have to harden our hearts in the generality of cases, while retaining the option of voluntary generosity. The right to asylum should be abrogated. No one arriving on these shores should have a legal entitlement to enter: the assumption must be that the overwhelming majority will be returned whence they came. This should apply to the Nigerians whose cases are currently in dispute. But if there were another Hungarian uprising, another Ugandan Asian expulsion; if the man who tried to hold up the tanks in Peking with a policeman's hand-signal had escaped to Britain — then of course we should extend a welcome.

We cannot relieve all the world's ills, so our choice of which to relieve is bound to be capricious. We may as well not add dishonesty to all our other faults.

The asylum policy I am proposing has already been practised for several decades in one British colony, without any complaints. In Hong Kong, those who attempt to flee from an oppressive communist state are routinely returned to their oppressors. There is no alternative; the colony would otherwise sink under the weight of refugees. But so might Britain. Chris Patten has rightly recommended that we should learn from Hong Kong's economic successes, but one of the ingredients of that success has been a refusal to grant a right of asylum. That is an example which we should follow.

Any decision to abolish the right of asylum would be widely criticised. The international *bien pensantry* would accuse Britain of inhumanity and racism. Foreign governments would express their disapproval, with varying degrees of sincerity. But there would be a great deal of covert admiration and envy — and others would follow us.

Our own judiciary would also be upset, for the present confusion maximises judicial review and meddling. But we should not allow our immigration policy — or any other policy — to be invented by judges acting as an unelected legislature.

As for racism, our immigration policy has a racial component — does anyone believe that the inhabitants of Hong Kong would have been denied passports had they been of British stock?

Tough immigration laws are essential for good race relations. There is no reason for racial tension in this country. We do have a small percentage of citizens of non-European stock, most of whom are doing very well. A minority do have and cause problems, but these are by no means insurmountable. The desirable process of helping them to assimilate would be made much harder if the fears of the white majority were to be aroused by uncontrolled immigration. It has been widely understood at least since the mid-1970s that good race relations depend on strict immigration control. The right of asylum is one of the last remaining means of undermining that control.

So it will remain, even if the Government's proposals are implemented. There will be restrictions on social security; it will be made harder for asylum-seekers to find jobs — but Britain will still entice innumerable people from distressed conditions in other countries. Ministers have allowed their civil servants and their liberal critics to inhibit them. What is presently offered is not a tough-minded attempt to grapple with fundamentals, but marginal, grandmother's-footsteps changes, which will not solve the problem. Some future government will eventually have to return to the asylum question, and deal with the basic flaws.

It's a dirty business

Tiny Rowland has lost control of the company he has nurtured for 34 years — and to a board he appointed

Bernard Levin

Some people are never happy if they are not in a fight, or limbering up for one. I know that that is true, because I am myself one of those very people. No, I do not punch heads, far less brandish knives, but if there is a scrap in which words alone are the weapons used, count me in.

I hope he will take this in good part, but I cannot but think that Tiny Rowland fits perfectly the bill of "never quite happy if not in a fight". Even if I am mistaken, Tiny can hardly deny that — whether he started it or joined in or was hit first — he is almost always found donning the gloves, and I don't mean the kind of gloves which keep people warm when it's snowing.

Well, if my readers' appetite has been whetted by the above, it is likely that they will at least want to know more about this remarkable figure (figure indeed, for he stands well over six feet), and it is natural for them to seek more about him from someone who has a *Who's Who*.

Ah, but now for Tiny's greatest trick. We hardened newspapermen watch, heaving with laughter as the trick is unfolded before the eyes of the innocent public; we have seen it many times before, but now bewilderment breaks out in all directions. *For Tiny is not in Who's Who*. And he is not there, because he does not want to be there.

Oh, yes, you won't believe it, and you will borrow a *Who's Who*, or finger one in the nearest public library. We've got him, we cry — Rowland, there is the name in good black print — but you must peer more closely, for the Rowland you nobbled was not Tiny Rowland, but another Rowland, this one Christopher, Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture, which as a description of Tiny would be going pretty far.

Nor is there any solace from the next Rowland down, for he is Rowland, David, Stipendiary Magistrate for Mid Glamorgan, and no one has ever seen Tiny in Mid Glamorgan. And Rowland, Geoffrey, QC, Solicitor-General for Guernsey, no doubt has a lovely, sunny life with hardly a single yearly murder to deal with. As for Rowland, Air Marshal Sir James, we have here a brave fighter, so it is fitting, therefore, that he has been given the honour of being the Governor of New South Wales.

Then there are Rowland, David, Chairman of Lloyd's since 1993; Rowland, Mark, Social Security and Child Support Commissioner; and finally Rowland, His Honour Robert Todd, County Court Judge of Northern Ireland.

As you see, Tiny is an elusive figure. But more to the point, he is a tough one, and above all a persistent one. Again and again he goes into a fight (see above) and wins it, even when the odds are stacked high against him.

Now I have said that I like a fight; but I do not fight at random. I choose the side which I think is in the right. And the fight in question here is Lonrho *v* Dieter Bock.

You cannot, of course, have forgotten Lonrho and its battles. Some of those battles were bloody indeed; when Alan Bond attempted a challenge to Tiny and his empire, Bond limped out of the ring and not long after that was totally ruined. Nobody could call Tiny Rowland a gentle fighter, and to try to do him down would be appallingly dangerous; moroever, when he fights he is not necessarily in the right. And — this is going back into the past — when he owned *The Observer*, very many at the paper wished Tiny had never been born.

But this is today, and the adversaries are Tiny Rowland and Dieter Bock.

I must make clear that Tiny is not fighting to scrape up a few pounds which would keep him out of the workhouse. He made his pile, and a high pile it was; experts in these matters tell me that Tiny for a long time had a yearly salary of a million and a half. But it wasn't the money that caused him to rear up and fight: it was that he had been pushed out of Lonhro, and Dieter Bock had taken his place.

And in this fight, I am on Tiny Rowland's side. (I wanted to start my broadside by saying that Bock is a beastly Kraut, but that might be somewhat embarrassing, true though it is, because Tiny himself has more than a touch of the Kraut-brush.)

I am not going to pour statistics over my readers, not least because I would not understand what was being poured. You must understand that this is not to do with mergers or shareholders or conglomerates or rights issues or non-executive directors or a thousand more words that mean something about something else. No doubt that is all very important in the business, but it leaves out one crucial part of the story: the heart.

It is no use telling me that, in the old saw, money has no smell. Tiny Rowland has a fortune that must come to rather more than a hundred million pounds: but he has lost the company that he created, built up, and loved for 34 years. Pause here: when the annual general meeting took place, Tiny was fighting not to bring back his beloved 34-year-old creature, but to be honorary president of the business — not quite, after all, what he had once had, but still something. He had to get 75 per cent of the shareholder votes to become president, and he knew that practically all of those 75 per cent would have to come from small investors, for the other 25 per cent would sniff, wink and make sure that Tiny (by one and a half per cent as it came about) would lose.

And so he did. But as the cheers of the little people rang out, Tiny shouted above the din one very telling sentence. Turning to the members of the board of the company he cried: "I appointed every one of you."

When I was young, and wondering what I might do with my life, I thought of various possibilities. I thought of many, like medicine, or teaching, or the stage, or politics, or art, or even carpentry. But, curiously, business was never even in my mind. Have I wasted my years by not becoming a businessman? Perhaps; who knows how fate throws down the cards? But I have a clue: if a man builds up a huge business and runs it successfully — very successfully — for 34 years, and then is ousted by the very directors he appointed, I think, I do truly think, that I did not make a mistake when I failed to consider business as a career.

Tiny Rowland (incidentally, I have only met him a couple of times and those briefly, and I have never had any favours from him) is the epitome of the man who will not give in. Remember his colossal and enormously expensive fight against the al Fayeds? In the end, they kissed and made up, but something tells me that this time it will be a fight to the finish. I have already had countless column inches from him, and if I know Tiny he won't stop there. One very Tinyish statement from him suggests that he will certainly not stop anywhere. It says: "Let there be no doubt, Mr Bock won't have the time to do property deals in Germany or anywhere else. He'll be too busy facing me in court."

Tiny has a forest of Big Berthas, but he can be subtle when he wants. He has put together a fascinating sideways attack on Dieter Bock in a somewhat rarefied form. With no shouting (much less shooting) Tiny tells investors who are thinking of taking shares in — well, let Tiny speak for himself:

> The Board of Lonrho proposes a merger of its platinum assets with a competitor, the Impala platinum mines . . . These terms are not good enough, when it is realised that as formulated they result in: a price far less than that envisaged . . . loss of ultimate control of Lonrho's biggest asset . . . loss of Lonrho's central attraction for outside investors . . . loss of direction at Lonrho . . . exclusion worldwide from any further platinum dealing or mining by Lonrho . . . It is my firm belief that this is the wrong deal and should be voted down in the interest of Lonrho and its shareholders.

Not bad for a man who shouts down an entire board, eh?

At the moment, Tiny is out of the ring, and can only wield Tiny's Curse. But I found in this tale much to think about. For 34 years he cultivated that company, and now he sees it in other hands. Was I not right, all those years ago, to shun business?

The music of the spheres

Anjana Ahuja salutes *Galileo* as it reaches Jupiter

On the sixth floor of the Huxley Building at London's Imperial College, two of the corridors are lined with reminders of worlds beyond our own. Photographs and drawings of inhospitable planets, long-tailed comets, crater-studded moons and pockmarked asteroids, together with descriptions of the breathtaking phenomena to be found there, have inspired and enthused a generation of space scientists. Soon the spacecraft *Galileo* will add its souvenirs to this fine collection.

I stepped into these corridors five years ago, when I joined the space and atmospheric physics group as a doctoral student. No other discipline seemed to me as heroic, frightening, challenging or otherworldly. I was fortunate enough to be welcomed into the space science community during the infancy of two epic adventures. *Ulysses*, the spacecraft whose voyage to the Sun was to be the basis of my thesis, was launched in the month I joined the group. *Ulysses* has carried out its duties faultlessly, performing a spectacular rendezvous with Jupiter in 1992 before turning round and heading for the Sun, which it reached last year.

The other adventure began a year earlier in 1989, when *Galileo* began its roundabout odyssey to Jupiter. Its six-year voyage — via Earth twice, Venus, and two asteroids — was completed just after midnight last night, bringing to a close one of the most exciting, troubled and costly chapters in the history of space exploration. *Galileo*, against all odds, is now the hero of the hour.

The event which has most captured the imagination is the fate of the small daughter probe released last July. If all goes as expected, the probe will also have reached Jupiter — about 400 million miles from Earth — last night. It will have become the first visitor to probe one of the giant planets (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune), descending into the Jovian atmosphere to record 75 precious minutes' of information about the harsh conditions within. As the probe parachuted first through the planet's frozen clouds of ammonia, then through a layer of ice crystals and water droplets, it would have been beaming back — via the mother craft — information about its eventual grave.

The probe, barely a metre across, would either have roasted in the intense heat or been squashed to a pip by the extraordinary atmospheric pressures. And that demise would have taken place above the real inferno that constitutes the planet itself — a boiling, bubbling soup of liquid hydrogen.

Attempting to manoeuvre the mother spacecraft *Galileo* into orbit must have been heart-stopping for mission control at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. Upon arrival at Jupiter, the spacecraft would have braked, fired its engines for 48 minutes and thrust into orbit with a little gravitational help from Io, one of Jupiter's biggest moons. *Galileo* will now circle the planet for 22 months, recording, measuring and photographing phenomena that scientists have so far only guessed at.

Io is the worst-tempered of Jupiter's 16 moons, and the most volcanically active body in the solar system, continuously spewing sulphur. *Galileo* will soon brave Io's intense radiation field again in order to photograph this extra-terrestrial eyesore in unprecedented detail.

Besides Io, the largest planet in the solar system has three other prominent moons. Europa, Ganymede and Callisto and Io were first observed through a telescope by Galileo — not the spacecraft but the Italian Renaissance astronomer — who saw "four planets, never seen from the very beginning of the world up to our own times". In remembrance of this, these "planets" were christened the Galilean moons.

Before *Voyager* sailed close to them in the late 1970s, scientists assumed that these moons were similar. But Io and Europa are craterless balls, unlike Ganymede and Callisto. Europa is the smallest and bears an icy crust. Callisto is covered with ice and rock, and dotted with mountains. Ganymede is the brightest and biggest of the quartet, and is the largest moon of any planet.

Jupiter, which spins at the rate of one revolution every ten hours, is the only planet to radiate more energy than it absorbs, and would have been a star had it been about ten times bigger. So studying the planet may give clues to how our closest star, the Sun, came into being. The probe will also study Jupiter's turbulent weather, including the Great Red Spot, a hurricane that has raged uninterrupted for three centuries.

Galileo has already furnished close-up images of asteroids, Venus, and of Comet Shoemaker-Levy speeding towards Jupiter. Critics point out that $1.4 billion has been spent on the spacecraft since its inception. But space exploration is as much about culture as science. We are continually seeking answers to the most fundamental question, that of our existence. How are we to do that if we cannot explore the wonders on our celestial doorstep?

Squawk back

THE HISTORY of the ravens at the Tower of London has been chequered. Two were dismissed this year for "conduct unbecoming". Another was killed by a police spaniel. But the two latest recruits speak English.

Thor and Odin both arrived at the Tower last month to replace the two rogues which were cast out. They came from the Owl Sanctuary near Ringwood in the New Forest, where they were nursed as chicks after they fell out of a tree which was cut down.

Ravening at the Tower

Although there are no reports of them conversing yet at their new home, visitors to the Tower should not be alarmed if they are greeted by a squawky "Hello" or even insulted with "What you want then?" Chris Milson, the Owl Sanctuary's manager, admits they struggle with long sentences. "But they are very good mimics. The ravens talk when they want to," he says. "They won't talk while you are there, but wait until you move and then say one word because they know you will turn back.

"The BBC were once filming them as if they were wild ravens. They couldn't use the end of the footage because one of them flew up within inches of the camera lens and said 'Hello, mate'."

Smashed

A PARTY hosted by the perfumer Fabergé and partly organised by Princess Alexandra's daughter, Marina Mowatt, looks likely to result in a lawsuit for damages of more than £40,000.

The celebrity knees-up last month at one of the smartest penthouses in London, was attended by the likes of Britt Ekland and upmarket characters such as Michelle Collins (who plays Cindy in *EastEnders*), and the Gladiator "Saracen". They are said to have taken cover as the yob element swung into its stride and wreaked havoc. "The floor, the walls, the steel and the leatherwork and paintwork are all damaged," says the Manhattan Loft Corporation, which owns the flat and is planning to sue.

A company called Pushca Productions organised the party with the help of Marina Mowatt. "They are planning to bring in an independent assessor," says a Fabergé representative. "It's been blown out of proportion."

● *The BBC World Service will ease the path for unrepentant smokers when it bans smoking in communal parts of its Bush House headquarters. Anybody desperate for a gasper can apply for subsidised nicotine patches from a nurse in the building.*

Temper temper

EVELYN WAUGH was sceptical about the art of graphology. The Royal Society of Literature is holding a sale later this month to raise money, and one of the letters included is from the bad-tempered author to one Mrs Frederick Stopp, dated June 22, 1963.

"Timothy's been dropped from his Nativity Play"

He writes: "It may interest you to know that the other day a friend of mine in Paris met a lady who claimed to be a 'qualified graphologist'. Shown a letter of mine she proclaimed I had a singularly beautiful character but no imagination . . ."

Wise guys

A FESTIVE feeling has hit the Treasury. Kenneth Clarke's advisers, the "seven wise men", are somewhat depleted. After a succession of recent departures, only Gavyn Davies, Patrick Minford and Timothy Congdon remain.

"It is very likely that others may be appointed in the near future, but for the festive season, rather appropriately, we are down to the biblical three wise men," says Congdon.

Jane's plains

HUGH GRANT has upset the Jane Austen Society: he is too handsome. Emma Thompson who stars with Grant in the forthcoming film of *Sense and Sensibility* and wrote the screenplay, says the society rang New York to complain about the foppish actor playing Edward Ferrars, saying he was "too good-looking".

Ravening on the set

Susan McCartan the society's honorary secretary explains. "No one is particularly handsome in *Sense and Sensibility*. They should have found people who look like the people of the time and don't behave as though they were in the 21st century. But we just grin and bear it."

● *Yesterday morning at the Institute of Civil Engineers, Jack Cunningham, the Labour Shadow Heritage Secretary, launched Labour's Football Charter. To the astonishment of the assembled football types, however, he stood up and introduced himself as Shadow Environment Secretary, a post he held between 1983-1989.*

P·H·S

هكذا من الاصل

TIMES PAST THE TIMES FUTURE

LEST YE BE JUDGED

Judges may fight ministers, but there is no constitutional crisis

Lord Mackay of Clashfern denied vigorously yesterday that he has warned the judiciary "not to overstep their powers by using judicial review to challenge ministerial decisions". After speculation that he was going to pronounce sonorously on the sovereignty of Parliament, the Lord Chancellor went out of his way to defend the independence of judges and the vital importance of judicial review.

Nonetheless, it is no secret that he and other senior figures in the legal world are anxious about the increasing antagonism between judges and ministers. To add to the impression of impending constitutional crisis, Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice, is soon to meet the Prime Minister to discuss the problem. Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, must be losing count of the number of times he has been condemned by judges in the press, in court or in private.

In October, Lord Taylor himself led the charge against Mr Howard's announcement that repeat rapists would automatically be sentenced to life and that minimum jail sentences would be introduced for other serious offenders. Last week, Lord Donaldson, the former Master of the Rolls, launched a fierce broadside against the Home Secretary, describing the measures he has proposed as contrary to the rule of law. Following this lead, Lord Ackner, a former law lord, accused the Government of "playing politics with the administration of justice". A string of judgments against ministerial decisions has prompted many politicians to question the scope of judicial review. Sir Ivan Lawrence, Tory MP for Burton, has been the most outspoken critic of the judiciary's alleged hubris but not the only one.

Some have seen in these skirmishes the seeds of a damaging constitutional conflict between an overmighty Conservative Government and a desperately exasperated judiciary. Although the friction upon which this claim is based is undeniable, it should be kept in perspective.

First, it is scarcely new. The tension between common law and statute, between judicial discretion and executive fiat, has long been a feature of the British constitution — most famously in the great disputes in the 17th century between Sir Edward Coke and Lord Chancellor Ellesmere.

Second, the current debate is not party political. Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Shadow Lord Chancellor, recently criticised "greater activism" in judicial review and described some judicial views as "contrary to the established law and usages of our country". This may not be Tony Blair's view. But it illustrates that concern about judicial review is not confined to Conservative ministers allegedly determined to curtail ancient liberties. The number of applications to the High Court for leave to challenge administrative decisions rose from 160 in 1974 to 2,886 in 1993. It is reasonable both to question this increase and to ensure that judical review is not discredited by overuse.

Most importantly, the argument is less strictly adversarial than it might first appear. One of the most distinctive features of the British constitution is that the separation of powers is blurred. The Cabinet is the hinge between the executive and the legislature; a government is formed on the basis of its ability to command a majority in the House of Commons. The executive enjoys a wide range of quasi-judicial powers, such as the setting of tariffs for life sentences. The judiciary, likewise, has gained greater powers to quash government decisions — a welcome counterbalance to the centralisation of executive power. Within this framework, the struggle for constitutional advantage is natural, continuous and will long outlast this Government.

POUNDS, EUROS AND SENSE

A picture of that common currency in your pocket

The French President and German Chancellor last night reaffirmed their faith that at least some European states would create a single currency in 1999. Next week's EU summit in Madrid will say the same and officially christen the new currency-to-be as the "euro". In the new year, the European Commission will start a sales campaign for the euro-mark, the euro-franc, the euro-schilling and the euro-pound. We do not wish today to join the great debate on all this — merely the little debates.

Let us suppose that the single currency does start on January 1, 1999. The new notes and coins will not enter circulation for three more years. Six months later, an unknown number of national currencies will disappear as legal tender. Both technical and political reasons require such a long transition: the German authorities want the symbolically powerful deutschmark kept alive as long as possible and the reminting of an unknown proportion of the EU's 12 billion banknotes and 300,000 tons of coins itself needs several years.

The unknown aspects of this massive change multiply by leaps and bounds. On the first day of 1999, the exchange rates of participating currencies are due to be irrevocably locked. This is liable to be a big event on the financial markets and something of an anti-climax in the streets. Relative values of the euro-franc and euro-mark will not change; banks will no longer have a buying and selling rate for currencies inside the new zone. But the traveller between, say, France and Germany will notice little difference.

He or she can try buying a *Schinkenbrot* in Germany with francs. Just as now, a friendly sandwich bar may accept them. But, Germany has told its partners, the shopkeeper will not be compelled to accept the notes and coins from other states who have joined the monetary union. So, for the three-year phase-in, banks should still have business in swapping francs, marks and guilders. Running no risk of currencies moving against each other, bank charges for money-changing should fall to reflect only the administrative costs involved. Would anybody care to bet 10 euros that banks will find a way of inserting a few extra charges into the process?

Year One, not to mention Years Two and Three, of the new era will thus closely resemble the old era. British travellers and tourists entering a euro-zone which does not include sterling will find managing money at least as complicated as now. Simplification of the daily life of the euro-punter in the single market will not arrive until the middle of 2002. As that date and the real birth of the euro approaches, shops prices will be in both euros and old money — resembling the duplicate labels which adorned British goods while people adjusted to decimal coinage in Britain in 1971. The European Commission is keeping an open mind on whether or not shops and businesses will be forced to show both old and new currencies. Six months of changeover happen in 2002 and both currencies will exist as legal tender alongside each other. Millions of slot machines and cash registers must be changed and the banks, makers and users are all appealing for subsidies to help defray the cost.

The advocates of a single currency say that member countries will have their economies invigorated by all this. They also promise that travellers will find life simpler. It is true that opportunities for hoisting prices invariably invigorate the alert entrepreneur. As for the easy life for travellers, just wait for it.

LIVING DOLLS

Girls should not model themselves on Barbie

If a Barbie doll were a living woman, she would be too thin to conceive a child and would probably be hospitalised for anorexia. Her improbable proportions — equivalent to 39-18-33 — would be possible to achieve in real life only through an unhealthy combination of obsessive dieting and the surgeon's knife: such a shape would surely call for the removal of her lower ribs and the insertion of silicone implants in her breasts. Yet this representation of the dangers of surgical engineering and near-starvation looks set to be the best-selling Christmas toy this year. Is Barbie really the role model that we want for our daughters?

In recent years, doctors have noticed an alarming increase in eating disorders, not just among adolescents, but from girls as young as eight. Can this be surprising, when a recent advertisement for their favourite toy ran, "Now she's lost a few pounds, she's even more attractive"? A study by the University of Arizona comparing the attitudes of white and black girls to their bodies found that 90 per cent of the white girls expressed dissatisfaction and saw dieting as a panacea. Their ideal woman? Five feet seven inches, a mere seven stone, with long legs and flowing hair. As the researchers comment, this emaciated fantasy "was a living manifestation of the Barbie doll".

Yet of the black teenagers, 70 per cent were content with their bodies. They talked about appearance in terms of style, attitude, pride and personality. While the white girls wanted to be thin, the black girls preferred to be shapely. They may bemoan the absence of black role models from toy manufacturers, but at least they are not caught up in the invidious Barbie spell.

Women have always cared about their appearance, and girls have always been more concerned than boys. But there used to be a time when "perfection" in shape was somewhat easier to achieve than it is now. There is no need to hark back to Rubens or even Manet to find a time when women were supposed to look womanly.

Just a generation ago, the average model weighed 8 per cent less than the average woman; today, the difference is 23 per cent. And many of them now go under the knife as well as smoking and taking appetite-reducing drugs in order to achieve this "ideal" shape. The more publicly esteemed the supermodels become, the more freakish is their appearance. Yet these catwalk models — the nearest living equivalent of the Barbie doll — are the template against which teenage girls measure themselves and find themselves "fat".

Why, as a census study found yesterday, do many more teenage girls smoke than boys? Primarily because smoking reduces the appetite and allows them to lose weight. It is time to restore some sanity to this distorted world. Fashion victims need not look like famine victims. And parents too can play a part: by a decision this Christmas to go on a Barbie-buying strike.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Crown copyright and public access to laws of the land

From Lord Lester of Herne Hill, QC

Sir, Mr Justice Laddie (report, Law, December 5; letter, December 6) is right to draw attention to the extraordinary over-breadth of British copyright law in protecting government publications, and the way the exploitation of Crown copyright (to which I would add parliamentary copyright) severely hampers the public's access to information about the law of the land and the work of Parliament and Government.

The Crown owns the copyright in Acts of Parliament and statutory instruments. Parliament owns copyright in works made under the direction or control of either House, including *Hansard* and committee reports. These copyrights are administered by HMSO, operating as a separate business organisation run on strictly commercial lines.

In October 1994, the Hansard Society kindly published the paper I wrote with Lindsay Mackie and Michael Renshaw — *What Price Hansard*? — drawing attention to the scandalously high price of *Hansard*, of other parliamentary and government papers, and even of statutes. We pointed to the much more enlightened policies and practices in other democracies, and made practical recommendations to improve the public's ability to afford to read this material.

Last month I asked the Government whether they would consider amending our legislation (as has been done in New Zealand) to abolish Crown copyright in legislation and in the copying of parliamentary or judicial proceedings. The answer — which readers will have to pay £4.20 to read in the day's *Hansard* (November 22) — was that the Government would not do so because "Copyright legislation offers valuable protection against inappropriate use of legislation, for example in connection with advertising".

In Australia, a standard work on intellectual property law states:

> Prerogative rights in respect of public documents, such as statutes and judgments, are no longer appropriate in a modern democratic state, which is far removed in time and condition from the circumstances which spawned such claims in Tudor and Stuart England.

I agree with this refreshingly democratic view, reflected in Sir Hugh Laddie's equally refreshing lecture. The present and unique restrictions in this country are plainly operating against the public interest.

If Parliament refuses to abolish parliamentary and Crown copyright in these works, it should at least create a right of access to legislative material and parliamentary debates and reports without cost or at only marginal cost.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY LESTER,
House of Lords.
December 6.

From Mr Martin Howe

Sir, Since it is the State which issues Acts of Parliament, rules and regulations, and many other official documents which make law and directly affect citizens, it is surely inappropriate that the State should then levy copyright reproduction fees on the dissemination of these materials to citizens who are affected by them. The fact that the right to levy this hidden tax is vested in a money-driven, self-funding agency such as HMSO makes the position worse, not better, as Mr Pond, Head of the Public Information Office, seems to suggest in his letter (December 6).

This problem is not just about money. The monopoly conferred by copyright law can be used to suppress altogether the publication of materials against the wishes of the official owner of the copyright.

The Bavarian State Government, for instance, has recently taken action through the Swedish courts to suppress the publication of a critically annotated Swedish edition of *Mein Kampf* and to destroy stocks of the book. It is doing so by enforcing the copyright of Adolf Hitler, which is said to have vested in the State of Bavaria after Hitler's death.

Since Hitler died 50 years ago, his copyrights would have expired in most countries at the end of this year, were it not for an EC directive passed in 1993 to align the rest of the EC with German law. This compels member states to extend copyright terms to 70 years after the death of authors. Regulations to implement this major change in British law are now going through Parliament, without debate, under the statutory instrument procedure.

Mr Justice Laddie's remarks are welcome in bringing to public attention the problems of excessive and inappropriate copyrights and their potential for abuse.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN HOWE,
8 New Square, Lincoln's Inn, WC2.
December 6.

Synod and sin

From Mr T. J. P. Stevenson

Sir, Your unhelpful headline, "Synod rejects Carey's warning on living in sin" (December 1), was accompanied by the assertion that the synod had "backed the controversial report on the family . . .".

Members were asked merely to "take note" of the report, not to express a view on whether they approved it. Many who were strongly critical of some of the content voted in favour of taking note because they felt that to do otherwise would be somewhat ungracious: much voluntary work had been undertaken in its compilation.

It would therefore be unwise to regard the vote as a measure of the strength of the "liberal wing" in the synod.

Yours faithfully,
T. J. P. STEVENSON
(Synod member),
33 Saxonbury Close,
Crowborough, East Sussex.
December 1.

Synod and money

From Mrs Jill Lee

Sir, At a meeting of synod which I attended on November 29 the clergy were told by one of their number that "the money is in the parishes, go out and get it".

Synod members are more accustomed to the extortation: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel."

I trust that they will not be so naive as to believe the spokesman from the Church Commissioners who told them, later on the same day: "We will not make any more mistakes with your money."

Yours faithfully,
JILL LEE,
The King's Retreat,
King John's Walk, Eltham, SE9.

Royal bargain

From Mr A. M. Whaits

Sir, If Lord Macaulay's *History of England* is to be believed, the assertion in today's leading article, "Sacred service", that until last week no British monarch had attended a Roman Catholic service in this country since the Elizabethan settlement, is incorrect.

Macaulay records that James II used to attend Mass in his wife's oratory in St James's Palace, with the doors open to an antechamber. Then, in Passion week, 1685, James attended a Mass at Westminster performed "with regal splendour".

Though a Catholic, I have some sympathy with the Protestant demonstrators outside Westminster Cathedral (report, December 2). The daughters of James II, and the Hanoverians and their successors, made a Faustian bargain: the right to the throne in exchange for the right to choose their religion. No harm in reminding the present Monarch that had it not been so, we might now be subject to an obscure Stuart.

Yours faithfully,
A. M. WHAITS,
14 Vyvyan Terrace,
Clifton, Bristol, Avon.
December 2.

Tate taste

From Miss A. S. Luck

Sir, Perhaps the Tate suffers from mad cow disease (letters, December 2, 5, 7)

Yours faithfully,
ANDOLIE S. LUCK,
6 St George's Mews,
Regent's Park Road, NW1.

Government blow to film industry

From Officers of the British Academy of Film & Television Arts

Sir, The aim of this organisation is to achieve excellence in British film and television. We see the decision of the Secretary of State for National Heritage to end Britain's support for the Eurimages film production fund as an example of this Government's wilful blindness to the economic potential of these two industries.

The annual government contribution to Eurimages is £2 million. The fund, which is supported by all the countries of the Council of Europe (with the exception of the Vatican and Albania), has invested in 56 films since Britain joined in April 1993.

The benefit to our film industry has been out of all proportion to our contribution. We in Britain have the advantage of making films in the most marketable international language and many European producers have sought out British partners through Eurimages. If we do not stay in the fund they cannot do that, and as a result, our influence in European production will be diminished.

We need our European base to continue to compete, not just in Europe but also with the monolithic North American film and television industries. Without warning or consultation, the Government has attacked that base and diminished two industries with real potential to contribute to this country's wealth and international standing.

No doubt, the Government has its reasons for wanting to steer an independent course in Europe but this decision, which shaves a tiny amount from the National Heritage budget, will cause much damage to Britain with very little gain to the Exchequer.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID PUTTNAM
(Vice-President),
EDWARD MIRZOEFF
(Chairman),
KAREN BROWN,
TED CHILDS,
SIMON RELPH,
STEPHEN WOOLLEY,
The British Academy of Film & Television Arts,
195 Piccadilly, W1.
December 5.

Rural buildings

From the President of the Country Landowners Association

Sir, Libby Purves is right to say that people and their traditional trades matter as much, if not more than "collector's item" buildings ("Landscape with people", November 28). In the countryside, the survival of the building is largely dependent upon the survival of the trade.

Many of the thousands of listed buildings in rural Britain have no one to maintain them; neither English Heritage nor local authorities have the money. In these instances, the building must work for its own keep.

Planners and regulators need to be aware of this. Planners need to overcome prejudices to allow both new and traditional economic activities in redundant but valuable buildings. Regulators must avoid taking generalised EU directives and re-interpreting them in Whitehall guidelines which are then, in turn, added to and enforced by local inspectors.

Many a small but important rural business and barn has disappeared into this Brussels triangle.

Yours faithfully,
EWEN CAMERON,
President,
Country Landowners Association,
16 Belgrave Square, SW1.
November 29.

Trapped by nature

From Mr M. C. Turland

Sir, I was interested to read about birds caught up in plants (Feather Report, November 18; letter, November 24).

My wife and I are custodians of a cactus collection belonging to my son. During the summer the greenhouse is left open. On entering it one morning I discovered a wren captured by the hooks of a large *Mammillaria* cactus.

Both wings and tail were held fast, so I decided to cut the barbs away. After much careful snipping I was able to free the bird without too much damage to the plant.

Sad to say, one of the plant's long spines had impaled the wren's breast and it died later that day.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL C. TURLAND,
Ludlow House,
12 Kingsley Avenue,
Kettering, Northamptonshire.
November 28.

Cutting prison budgets

From Mr R. J. Kendrick

Sir, Having served as a prison governor in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, may I comment on your excellent report on budget cuts in the prison service ("Search for savings will halve high security prisons", November 28).

Successive inquiries from Mountbatten in 1966 to Learmont in October this year have all pointed in some way to the problem of over management.

While prison staff in England and Wales have struggled to keep to budgets and now face having them reduced, have their headquarters led by example? No. The real cost of the total headquarters machine has reached some 20 per cent of the £1.6 billion prison budget.

Continued HQ growth means more difficulty in consulting between departments, slow and cumbersome decision making, more papers landing on governors' desks, less efficient governing, less efficient security and so on.

The Home Secretary could achieve his aim of adding 12,000 prisoners and reducing budgets without causing total chaos if he confirmed the acting Director-General, Richard Tilt, as the first professional head of the prison service, but only if he makes him accounting officer independent of and equal to the permanent secretary in the Home Office.

His brief should be to slim down headquarters and to delegate responsibility to governors. The savings on the HQ budget would help governors to establish the sound regimes which are a vital component of security, as well as producing a substantial saving to the public purse.

The Scottish prison service courageously started down this road in the late 1980s. They were still going strong when I left them some three years ago to join the private sector.

Yours faithfully,
R. J. KENDRICK,
c/o The Prison Governors Association,
Horseferry House,
Dean Ryle Street, SW1.
November 29.

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

Changes of detail in Vermeer's work

From the Director of ArtWatch UK

Sir, The many dramatic changes evident in paintings cleaned for the Vermeer exhibition at the National Gallery in Washington constitute yet another art restoration debacle. Once again, critics applaud some alterations as "discoveries" or "gains" but ignore many others.

We "discover" (review, Arts, December 5) that Vermeer roughened part of his *View of Delft* with sand but are not told that one figure in the painting lost both his legs during the cleaning. Neither the catalogue nor reviews of the exhibition mention that the *Young Girl with a Flute* has lost four fifths of her necklace. The painting hanging on the background wall in *Woman Holding a Balance* had, before cleaning, one of Vermeer's characteristic low-key, simple black frames — a device recently praised by the exhibition's co-organiser, Arthur K. Wheelock Jr, for establishing a "quiet stable framework [which acts] as a compositional foil to the scene taking place before it" (*Vermeer*, Thames and Hudson, 1988). No more, alas.

The emergence of gilded surfaces during restoration has obliged Mr Wheelock in the exhibition's catalogue to celebrate the recovery of Vermeer's "original and more dynamic intent". To concur with this volte-face, we must believe that Vermeer intended to depict a picture frame with unmatching sides.

This mongrel arrangement is, self-evidently, the by-product of a restorer's tamperings and not the last pictorial word of one of the world's most sublime painters. Why are such interventions sanctioned? And why are they subject to so little art-critical scrutiny?

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL DALEY,
Director, ArtWatch UK,
15 Capel Road, East Barnet,
Hertfordshire.
December 6.

Their noble genes

From Lord Belhaven and Stenton

Sir, "The British peerage stopped breeding for brains at least 150 years ago, and started to breed for looks", writes Lord Rees-Mogg ("The best and brightest", November 30).

If that is what he thinks, from his vantage point on the cross benches, he must observe a lot of good-looking men on the Conservative benches.

I would like to ask, however, on what basis he founds such a wild generalisation. By far the majority of present hereditary peerages did not exist 150 years ago. Most people then "bred", if that is the word, for money and position. Nowadays they are expected to fall in love, at least initially, but money and position still play a part.

So far as I know, people in the past did not breed for brains — except, of course, that it was advisable for ladies to avoid complete idiots unless they happened to be very rich indeed.

Perhaps Lord Rees-Mogg should better leave these things to statisticians and opinion pollsters.

Yours faithfully,
BELHAVEN AND STENTON,
House of Lords.
December 1.

Bennet entail

From Somerset Herald

Sir, Mr D. L. Stewart, in his letter of November 30 on the entail which figures in the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*, wonders why Mr Bennet, as a tenant of full age, failed to address the matter [see also letters, November 18 and 25].

The point of the Fines and Recoveries Act of 1833 (not 1831) was that it made it inexpensive. Before 1833 an entail could only be barred by a fine or recovery. The former was only valid against one's issue and not, therefore, appropriate for Mr Bennet. Such fictitious actions could cost as much as £4,000 and, as the Longbourn estate was only worth £2,000 a year, Mr Bennet had a good reason for inactivity.

Mrs Bennet, as the daughter of an attorney, probably knew that the entail could be barred, which is why she says to her husband, "If I had been you I should have tried long ago to do something or other about it." Her husband — whose wish seems only to have been to increase his daughters' dowries and thus improve their marriage prospects and not to dismember his patrimony between them — was probably well advised to do nothing.

Yours faithfully,
THOMAS WOODCOCK,
Somerset Herald,
The College of Arms,
Queen Victoria Street, EC4.
December 3.

Tinkering with words

From Mr Peter C. Bartrum

Sir, "Tankering" (letters, December 1 and 2) is just another example of the law, "There is no noun that cannot be verbed."

Yours faithfully,
PETER C. BARTRUM,
2 Bay Court,
Doctors Commons Road,
Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire.
December 3.

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
December 7: The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh today visited Staffordshire and were received at Stoke-on-Trent Railway Station by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire (Mr James Hawley) and the Lord Mayor of the City of Stoke-on-Trent (Councillor James Dunn).

Her Majesty and His Royal Highness drove to Churchill China, Tunstall, and were received by the Group Chief Executive (Mr Stephen Roper).

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh toured the factory and viewed an archive display of the bicentennial history of the company.

Her Majesty afterwards visited Bradeley Village sheltered housing scheme, was received by the Chairman, Staffordshire Housing Association (Mr Frederick James), toured the centre and met residents.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh this afternoon visited J.C. Bamford Excavators Limited on the occasion of their Golden Jubilee and were received by the Chairman (Sir Anthony Bamford) and the Mayor of the Borough of East Staffordshire (Councillor Peter Haynes).

Her Majesty, accompanied by His Royal Highness, toured the factory and afterwards honoured the Chairman with her presence at Luncheon.

The Queen opened a replica of the garage in which Mr J.C. Bamford began work in 1945.

Her Majesty later opened the new Burton Hospital and was received by the Chairman, Burton Hospital NHS Trust (Mr David Elliot).

The Duke of Edinburgh this morning opened the Business Link (North Staffordshire) Centre, Festival Park, Stoke-on-Trent, and, as President, National Playing Fields Association, accepted a cheque from Moneystone Limited on behalf of the Association.

His Royal Highness this afternoon visited Carlsberg-Tetley Brewery, Burton-on-Trent.

The Duchess of Grafton, Sir Kenneth Scott, Mrs Mary Francis, Miss Penelope Russell-Smith and Lieutenant Commander Toby Williamson RN were in attendance.

December 7: The Prince Edward, Trustee, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, today gave a Luncheon at Buckingham Palace.

His Royal Highness, Trustee, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, this evening attended a Dinner at St James's Palace.

December 7: The Princess Royal, President, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, this morning attended a Trustees Meeting at Buckingham Palace.

Her Royal Highness this afternoon attended a Luncheon with the Executive Committee of the Army Board at the Officers' Mess, The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery, St John's Wood Barracks, London N8.

The Princess Royal, Colonel-in-Chief, Royal Corps of Signals, later received Major General Anthony Boyle upon relinquishing his appointment as Signal Officer in Chief and Brigadier Nigel Wood upon assuming the appointment.

Her Royal Highness, President, Save the Children Fund, this evening attended the 1995 Festival of Trees Gala Dinner at the Natural History Museum, London SW7.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
December 7: The Prince of Wales this morning visited Headquarters Allied Forces Northwestern Europe, Naphill, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

His Royal Highness this afternoon visited the College of Estate Management, Whiteknights, Reading, Berkshire.

KENSINGTON PALACE
December 7: The Princess of Wales, Patron, Centrepoint, this morning attended the Annual General Meeting at the Savoy Theatre, Strand, London WC2.

December 7: The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, Honorary President, The British Museum Development Trust, this morning attended a Meeting of the Council and remained to luncheon at the British Museum, London WC1.

Her Royal Highness, Grand President, St John Ambulance, was present this evening at The Order of St John Royal Sapphire Ball at the Dorchester Hotel, London, W1.

December 7: The Duke of Gloucester today visited Cheshire and was received on arrival by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire (Mr William Bromley-Davenport).

In the morning His Royal Highness opened the new extension to the Chief Office of the Cheshire Building Society, Castle Street, Macclesfield, and afterwards opened Wilmslow Health Centre, Chapel Lane, Wilmslow.

In the afternoon His Royal Highness opened the restored Orangery at Tatton Park, Knutsford, and later opened the display area at ERF plc, Sun Works, Sandbach.

Major Nicholas Barne was in attendance.

YORK HOUSE
December 7: The Duke of Kent this morning visited Chevron Aerospace Engineering Limited, Nottingham South Industrial Estate, Wilford, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, and was met on arrival by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire (Sir Andrew Buchanan, Bt).

The Duke of Kent this afternoon opened the new Headquarters of the Nottingham Health Authority, Standard Court, Nottinghamshire.

Captain Marcus Barnett was in attendance.

The Duke of Kent, Patron, this evening presented The Queen's Award for Export Achievement to Trinity College London, at the House of Lords, London SW1.

Royal engagements

The Duke of York will attend the enthronement of the Archbishop of York in York Minster at 2.10.

The Duchess of Kent, as patron, will attend the 'Not Forgotten' Association's christmas party at St James's Palace at 2.50.

Binney Memorial Medal

The Lord Mayor presented Mr David John Everett with the Binney Memorial Medal for bravery in support of law and order in the Metropolis, at a ceremony in Goldsmiths' Hall yesterday. The Lord Mayor, who was accompanied by the Lady Mayoress and the Sheriffs and their Ladies, also presented other bravery awards.

Luncheon

Canada-UK Chamber of Commerce
The Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador was the guest of honour and speaker at a luncheon of the Canada-United Kingdom Chamber of Commerce held yesterday at the Four Seasons hotel. Mr Timothy Battle, president of the chamber, was in the chair.The Canadian High Commissioner and Lord Shaughnessy were among those present.

University news

Essex
Professor Ivor Crewe to be Vice-Chancellor. He has been Acting Vice-Chancellor since the departure of the former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ron Johnston, in May.

Memorial service

Mr Ronald Ernest Utiger
A service of thanksgiving for the life of Mr Ronald Ernest Utiger was held yesterday in the Crypt Chapel, St Paul's Cathedral. Canon John Halliburton officiated, assisted by the Rev Christopher Mann. Mr Nicholas Barber and Lady Knight read the lessons. Mr David Dixon gave an address. Among others present were:

Mrs Utiger (widow), Mr and Mrs Nigel Riddle (son-in-law and daughter); Lord Peyton of Yeovil, the Hon Raymond and Mrs Bonham-Carter, Lady Moon, Sir Arthur Knight, Vice-Admiral Sir Hugh and Lady Thompson, Sir Robert Smith, Sir Thomas Macpherson, Dame Mary Smieton, Sir Christopher Lewinton (chairman, TI Group) with Mr Denis Saunders (director, administration), Mr James Roe (director, strategic development) and Mr John Hutchings (director, public relations).

Mr John Bridgeman (Director General of Fair Trading), Mr Paul Rata (managing director, British Alcan Aluminium) and Mrs Rata with Mr John Elton (non-executive director), Mr Christopher Bark-Jones (finance director) and Mr Richard Gaunt (corporate affairs manager); Mrs D G Jefferies (representing the chairman, National Grid Group) with Mr Eric Chefneux (engineering services director), Mr Colin Gibson (power network director), Mr Walter Robinson (non-executive director) and Mr Richard Drew (company secretary); Mr Richard Sermon (Shandwick International) with Mr Jonathan Mason.

Mr Derek Kingsbury (Fairey Group), Dr D A Harris (Aluminium Federation) and Mrs Harris, Mr Graham Mackenzie (Engineering Employers' Federation), Mr Malcolm Barr (representing the Headmaster, Shrewsbury School, and Shrewsbury School Foundation) with Air-Commodore D T Crompton and Mr Ian Edwards; Mr Ewen Cameron Watt (Mercury Asset Management), Mr Andy Stephens (British Library), Mr Murray Hallam (Withers), Mr David Cooper and Mr Neville Pinnington (St Margaret's Residents' Association).

Mrs David Dixon, Mrs Nicholas Barber, Mr Bryan Rigby, Mr B H von Portatius, Miss V von Portatius, Mr A von Portatius, Dr Charles Goodson-Wickes, MP, Major-General B P McGuinness, Mr Olaf Darkert, Mr George Davies, Mr Peter Bowring, Mr J L Wood, Mr and Mrs Philip Laurence, Mr and Mrs Godfrey Smith, Mr Otto Norland, Mr John Raisman, Mr and Mrs David Vaughan and Mr Anthony Smith.

Birthdays today

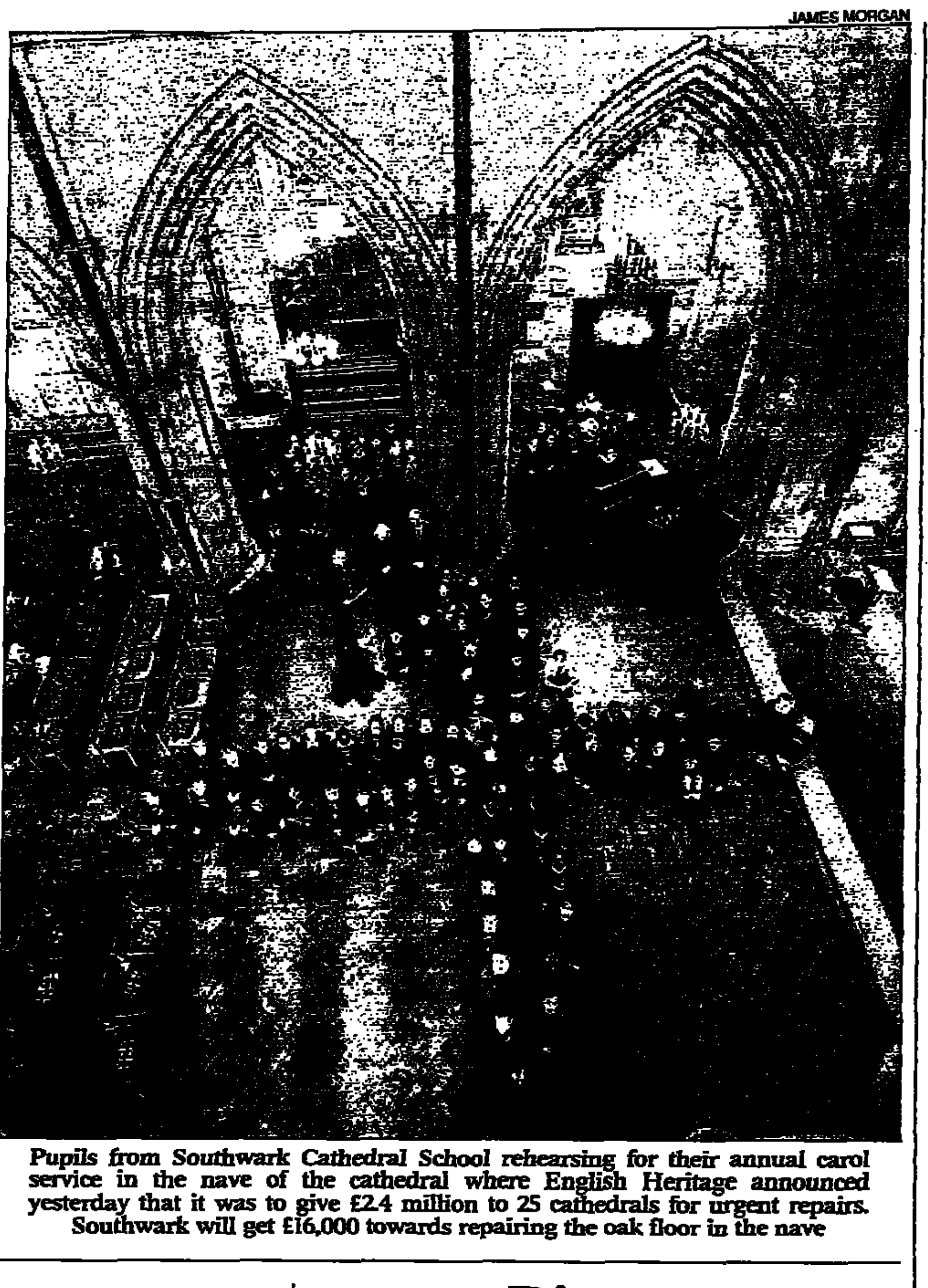
Miss Kim Basinger, actress, 42; Sir Ralph Carr-Ellison, Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, 70; Sir Julian Critchley, MP, 65; Miss Susan Danby, Principal, College of the Royal Academy of Dancing, 51; Sir Peter Daniell, former Senior Government Broker, 86; Mr Harold Elletson, MP, 35; Professor Sir Roger Elliott, physicist, 67; Mr Lucian Freud, OM, CH, painter, 73; Mr James Galway, flute player, 56; Sir de Villiers Graaff, former South African politician, 82; Mrs Pauline Green, MEP, 47; Sir David Hay, cardiologist, and his twin brother Sir Hamish Hay, former mayor of Christchurch, New Zealand, 68; Mr Geoff Hurst, footballer, 54; Sir Peter Levene, chairman, Canary Wharf, 54; Mr Terry McDermott, footballer, 44; Mr Justice Jonathan Parker, 58; Lord Prys-Davies, 72; Mr D.J. Verey, chairman, Lazard Brothers, 45; Earl Waldegrave, 55; Mr Lynn Wilson, chairman, Wilson (Connolly) Holdings, 56.

Church news

New bishops
Canon Christopher Hill, Canon Residentiary and Precentor of St Paul's Cathedral, diocese of London, is to be Suffragan Bishop of Stafford, diocese of Lichfield, succeeding the Right Rev Michael Scott-Joynt, now Bishop of Winchester.

The Right Rev Richard Hawkins, Suffragan Bishop of Plymouth, diocese of Exeter, is to be Suffragan Bishop of Crediton, same diocese, succeeding the Right Rev Peter Coleman, who retires at the end of April 1996.

JAMES MORGAN



Pupils from Southwark Cathedral School rehearsing for their annual carol service in the nave of the cathedral where English Heritage announced yesterday that it was to give £2.4 million to 25 cathedrals for urgent repairs. Southwark will get £16,000 towards repairing the oak floor in the nave

Receptions

Prime Minister
The Prime Minister and Mrs Major were the hosts at a reception held last night at 10 Downing Street.

Lord Mayor of Westminster
The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Westminster were the hosts at a reception held last night at City Hall before the lighting-up ceremony of the Oslo Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square. The Norwegian Ambassador and Mrs Vraalsen, the National Heritage Secretary and the Mayor of Oslo were present.

London Society of Chartered Accountants
Miss Evelyn Bowyer, FCA, Chairman of the London Society of Chartered Accountants, accompanied by the other office holders, hosted the Society's 125th Anniversary Reception held at the Museum of London yesterday. Guests included the Vice President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, Mr Christopher Laine FCA, Presidents of other District Societies of the Institute and representatives from other professional bodies.

Vizards Solicitors
The partners of Vizards welcomed guests to their annual insurance reception held at Inner Temple Hall last night for their insurance clients and friends, together with counsel and experts. Among those who attended were:

Lord Justice Beldam, Mr Crawford Lindsay QC, Mr Alistair MacDuff QC, Mr Patrick Twigg QC, Mr Colin Mackay QC, Mr Richard Davies QC, Mr William Milliner FRCS, Mr Bryan Jepp (Iron Trades Insurance Group), Mr Mike Powell (Prudential Assurance), Mr Ian Patterson (Royal Insurance), Mrs Alison Laxton (Sun Alliance General Insurances), Mr Paul Jacobi (Economic Insurance), Mrs Margaret Coates (Economic Insurance), Mr John Witton (BAA plc), Mr Nick Watkinson (Westminster Motor Insurance Association), Miss Tracey Marshall (Neville Russell) and Mr Brian Street (ECS Underwriting).

Dinners

Army Board
General Sir Charles Guthrie, Chief of the General Staff, was the host at a dinner given by the Army Board yesterday at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in honour of Colonel General Vassiliy Sobkov, Commander Ground Forces, Ukraine. Among those present were:

Madame Sobkov, Lady Guthrie, Sir Moray and Lady Stewart, General Sir Michael and Lady Rose, General Sir John and Lady Wilsey, General Sir Brian and Lady Kenny, Sir Rodric and Lady Braithwaite, Lieutenant-General and Mrs Robert Hayman-Joyce, and Colonel and Mrs Mykola Natyaga.

Glass Sellers' Company
Mr John G. Thorpe, Master of the Glass Sellers' Company, last night at the installation dinner held at Stationers' Hall, presented the Glass Sellers' Tankard 1995 to the President of the Senior Rates Mess of *HMS Spartan*. The award was in recognition of the contribution made by the Senior Rates during the recent docking of the boat.

Salmon and Trout Association
Miss Penelope Turing, Vice-President of the Salmon and Trout Association, presided at the annual dinner held last night at Fishmongers' Hall. Ms Fiona Armstrong, Baroness Mallalieu, QC, the Earl of Antrim, Prime Warden of the Fishmongers' Company, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, MP, and Lady Johnson Smith, Mr Keith Waters and Ms Silvia Corrieri were the principal guests.

B'Nai B'Rith
A dinner took place yesterday at Lincoln's Inn on the occasion of the B'Nai B'Rith First Lodge award presentation to Sidney Corob CBE. Tributes were paid by the Right Rev Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford, and Sir Sigmund Sternberg. Messrs Eldred Tabachnik QC, Alan Cohen and Dr Alan Webber also spoke. Mr Ernest Bello presided.

Association of British Health-Care Industries (ABHI)
Professor Alan Maynard, Director of the Centre for Health Economics at York University, was the guest of honour at the annual dinner of the Association of British Health-Care Industries held last night at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Mr Keith Wetherell, Chairman of the Association, presided.

Salters' Company

Mr Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, yesterday at Salters' Hall, presented the Salters' Company prize for the Teaching of Chemistry to Mrs Elaine Coop of Colyton Grammar School.

Sir Denys Henderson presented prizes to graduates in chemistry and chemical engineering, to students who had achieved the best results in the Salters' A-Level Advanced Chemistry Examinations and to winners of the Salters' City and Guilds prizes. Lord Remnant, Master, presided.

Forthcoming marriages

Dr S.J. Casey and Dr A.W. Woods
The engagement is announced between Sharon, daughter of Mr and Mrs M. Casey, of Stickney, Lincolnshire, and Andrew, son of Professor and Mrs W.A. Woods, of Chislehurst, Kent.

The Rev E.N. Coombs and Miss A.R. Wolverson
The engagement is announced between Edward, younger son of Mr and Mrs Michael Coombs, of Buckingham, and Annabelle, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Rodney Wolverson, of Little Abington, Cambridgeshire.

Mr E.J.C. Eves and Miss J. Stancombe
The engagement is announced between James, son of Mr Ted Eves and the late Mrs Alexandra Eves and stepson of Mrs Marvadene Brock Eves, of Beckford, Gloucestershire, and Julie, eldest daughter of Colonel and Mrs Michael Stancombe, of Godalming, Surrey.

Mr C.M. Farrant and Miss F.M. Quan
The engagement is announced between Craig Murray, eldest son of Dr and Mrs M. Farrant, of Nelson, New Zealand, and Frances Mary, eldest daughter of Mrs M.S. Quan, of Sydney, Australia, and Mr P.F. Quan, of Tygalgah, Australia.

Mr J.D. Feather and Miss D.L. Cameron
The engagement is announced between Jamie, eldest son of Mr and Mrs E.D. Feather, of Addingham, West Yorkshire, and Dawn, eldest daughter of Mr J.D. Cameron and Mrs M.E. Cameron, of Windsor, Berkshire.

Mr J.A. Goodman and Miss J.I.E. Finnigan
The engagement is announced between Julian, only son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Goodman, of Skilgate, Somerset, and Juliet, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Finnigan, of East Bridgford, Nottinghamshire.

Mr C.A. Hutchinson and Miss S.M. Todd-Young
The engagement is announced between Clive, younger son of Mr and Mrs Ian Hutchinson, of Allendale, Northumberland, and Samantha, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Ronald Todd-Young, of Brenchley, Kent.

Mr D.J. Newnes and Miss S.L. Smith
The engagement is announced between David, son of Mr and Mrs Rowland Newnes, of Chatham, Kent, and Sarah, daughter of Mr and Mrs Raymond Smith, of Leominster, Herefordshire.

Mr M.R. O'Donoghue and Miss C.A.P. Beauchamp
The engagement is announced between Mark, elder son of Mr and Mrs R.W. O'Donoghue, of Woking, Surrey, and Claire, only daughter of the Rev and Mrs A.H.P. Beauchamp, of Kirby Cross, Essex.

Mr J.W. Parker and Miss K.A. Thieme
The engagement is announced between James William, son of Sir Jonathan and Lady Parker, of Radwinter, Essex, and Kristin Alberta, daughter of Mr Donald Thieme, of Wellesley, Massachusetts, and Mrs Carole Thieme, of Needham, Massachusetts.

Mr M.J. Rippon and Miss A.J. Field
The engagement is announced between Matthew James, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Paul Rippon, of Brancaster, North Norfolk, and Amanda Jayne, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Victor Martin Field, of Carperby, Wensleydale, Yorkshire.

Mr P.C.D. Sprague and Ms D.J. Foyle
The engagement is announced between Peter, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Richard Sprague, of South Cadbury, Somerset, and Denise, daughter of Mr Richard Foyle, of Tangmere, Sussex and Mrs Rita Sperling, of Christchurch, Dorset.

Mr N.H. Woellwarth and Miss K.B. Peel
The engagement is announced between Nicholas, youngest son of Mr and Mrs H.A. Woellwarth, of Woking, Surrey, and Kathryn, youngest daughter of Dr and Mrs M.E. Peel, of Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire.

Marriage

Captain A.L. Chilton, RN, and Mrs L.F. Dobson
The marriage took place on Saturday, December 2, 1995, at Portsmouth, between Captain Antony Chilton and Mrs Fiona Dobson, née Forsyth.

Service dinners

RMCS
Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge, Chief of the Defence Staff, was the chief guest and speaker at the annual dinner of Infantry Officers of the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham, held last night at the college. Major M.P. Maer, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment presided. Major-General R.A. Pett, Director of Infantry, and Major-General D.J.M. Jenkins, College Commandant, were among those present.

"Not Forgotten" Association
The General Committee of the "Not Forgotten" Association held a dinner last night at the Victory Services Club for disabled ex-service guests. Major-General Sir Christopher Airy, chairman, presided.

RAF Brize Norton
The Hon Nicholas Soames, Minister of State for the Armed Forces, was the guest of honour at a ladies' guest night dinner of 10 Squadron RAF Brize Norton held last night in the officers' mess. Wing-Commander Peter Cornthwaite presided. Air Chief Marshal Sir William Wratten and Air Vice-Marshal David Hurrell attended.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Horace, Quintus Horatius Flaccus, Roman poet, Venusia, Southern Italy, 65 BC; Mary Queen of Scots, reigned 1542-67, Linlithgow, 1542; Eli Whitney, pioneer of the cotton gin, Westborough, Massachusetts, 1765; Georges Feydeau, dramatist, Paris, 1862; Jean Sibelius, composer, Hameenlinn, Finland, 1865; Norman Douglas, essayist and novelist, Thuringen, Austria, 1868; James Thurber, humorous writer, Columbus, Ohio, 1894; Jim Morrison, singer and poet, Melbourne, Florida, 1943.

DEATHS: John Pym, leader of the opposition to King Charles I, London, 1643; Thomas de Quincey, writer, Edinburgh, 1859; Gertrude Jekyll, gardener and landscape architect, Godalming, Surrey, 1932; Simon Marks, Baron Marks of Broughton, retail trade leader, London, 1964; Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel 1969-74, Jerusalem, 1978; John Lennon, singer and songwriter, shot, Manhattan, 1980.

Pope Pius IX declared the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary to be an Article of Faith, 1854.

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I myself shall tend my flock, and find them a place to rest, says the Lord God.
Ezekiel 34 : 15 (REB)

BIRTHS

BARROW - On December 4th, to Vanessa (née Branch) and David, a son, William David, a brother for Robert.

COOK - On December 1st, in Sheffield, to Jane (née Moffat) and Nicholas, a daughter, Lucy Catherine, a sister for Jenny.

DRAKE - See deaths.

GIBB - On November 16th, at North Salem, N.Y., to Kate (née Tonner) and Peter, a daughter, Maisie Florence.

HAYNES - On December 4th, to Charlotte (née Southall) and Tim, a son, Joseph Edward Penzer, a brother for Theo.

JAMES DUFF - On December 6th at Aberdeen Maternity Hospital, to Jayne (née Bryce) and David, a son, Patrick Alexander.

KOHLER - Leoni (née Butwick) and David are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter Alyce Miryam on 6th December 1995. A sister for Benjamin, granddaughter for Sandra and Tony Butwick and Rosa and Nat Kohler. A first great-granddaughter for Anne and Cecil Clement and Rose Butwick.

MATHEWS - On December 5th at St Helier, to Valerie and Robert, a daughter, Philippa Georgia, a sister for Vanessa.

NICOLL - On December 6th 1995, to Penny and Hamish, a daughter, Iona Mary Boyd, a sister for Ramsay and Hugo.

ROBINSON - On November 27th 1995, at The Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, to Katie (née Ryott Williams) and David, a daughter, Alexandra Juliet, a sister for Sophie.

WIEHAHN - On December 1st, to Emma (née Gay) and Dennis, a daughter, Petronella Lucy Lola.

DEATHS

BEATT - James, peacefully on 4th December, much loved husband of Helen, father of Cynthia, Kevin and Brian and adored grandfather. Private family cremation. Service of Thanksgiving at St Margaret's Church, Putney, 2 pm Wednesday 13th December. No flowers, but donations to Trinity Hospice, c/o Ashton Mathias, 221 Upper Richmond Road, London SW15 6SQ. Enquiries (0181) 788-1790.

BIRD - Julia. Peacefully in Arthur Rank House, Cambridge, on Wednesday December 6th 1995. Beloved wife of Peter and mother of Matthew and Elizabeth. Funeral Service to be held at St Andrew's Church, Girton, on Wednesday 13th December at 11.45 am followed by a private cremation. Flowers or donations to "The MacMillan Cancer Care Appeal" c/o Weyman Funeral Service, 26 Abbey Walk, Cambridge.

COOTE - On December 5th 1995, Muriel (née Elsmie) widow of Wing Cmdr. P.B. Coote, beloved mother of Ann and Susan, grandmother of Michael and Catherine. Private cremation, followed by a Thanksgiving Service at St Mary's Church Motcombe, nr. Shaftesbury, Dorset on Thursday 14th December at 2.30 pm. Family flowers only. Donations if desired for St Michael's Cheshire Home, may be sent to Bracher Brothers, F/D Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QL. Tel: (01747) 822494.

DAVIES - On December 7th 1995, peacefully at Dudwell St Mary Nursing Home, Joy Muriel (née Combe). Beloved wife of the late Derek Davies. Formerly of Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. Service at Tunbridge Wells Crematorium on Tuesday 19th December at 11.30 am. Flowers, and enquiries to C. Waterhouse & Sons, High Street, Burwash, E. Sx. Tel: (01435) 882219.

DRAKE - Oliver Alexander Gideon. On December 6th at Edinburgh Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Oliver, aged 6 weeks, son of David Drake and Helen Miles.

EVANS - Sir Charles in his 78th year, peacefully at High Pastures Nursing Home, Deganwy, on December 8th. Beloved husband, father, grandfather and friend. Private family funeral.

GOURIET - Annie Wallace (Nancy) peacefully at Trinity Hospice, Clapham, on December 6th 1995, dearly beloved wife of the late Geoffrey, devoted mother to Gerald and Gretta and the late Victor and proud grandmother of Geoffrey. Funeral Service at Putney Vale Crematorium on Tuesday December 12th at 11.30 am. Flowers and enquiries to Mears & Cotterill, 169 Merton Road, Wandsworth SW18 5EF, tel: (0181) 874-7698.

HACKETT - Douglas, of Woodhouse Eaves, Leics; on 5th December, peacefully, not alone. Dearly loved father and grandfather, and husband of the late Barbara Winifred. Mourned by Nicholas, Helena, Francoise and Shane, Fleur, Neil, Patrick, Roderick and Tamsin. Funeral at Newtown Linford Parish Church on 12th December at 1.15 pm. Enquiries to Ginns and Gutteridge, Leicester (0116) 251 6117.

HODIN - On December 6th Professor J.P. Hodin aged 90, beloved husband of Pamela, dear father of Michael and Annabelle and loving grandfather of Morwenna, Georgiana, Ruby and Samson. Funeral Service at St John's Wood Church at 1 pm on Tuesday 12th December. Memorial Service later. Enquiries to Leverton & Sons, (0171) 387-6075.

LANDEGGER - On December 6th in California aged 88, Pamela, elder daughter of John Walter, much loved mother of Michael and Sylvia and sister of Roddy and Ines.

LEWIS - Doctor James Edward (John) passed peacefully away at home in Jersey on Wednesday 6th December 1995, husband of Ann and father of Fenton, Philippa, Roger and Paul. All enquiries please to H.W. Maillard & Son Ltd., Funeral Directors tel: (01534) 37291.

MARETT - Piedad (née Sanchez-Gavito). Died peacefully on Wednesday 6th December 1995, in Jersey C.I. Wife of the late Sir Robert Marett, much loved mother of Suzanne and devoted Nana of Michael and Alexandra. Will be greatly missed by all her family in Mexico, and by her friends around the world. Enquiries to Pitcher and Le Quesne F/D. tel: (01534) 53530.

MILNER - Lieut - Commander Geoffrey Ernest M.B.E., R.N.R. Ret'd. Son of Ernest Edward Milner and beloved husband of Dorothy, late of Elders and Fyffes, peacefully passed away on 3rd December aged 89 at home after a long illness. Will be sadly missed by his family. Service to be held at St Margaret-at-Cliff Church, nr. Dover on Thursday 14th December 2.30 pm.

MORRIS - On December 5th 1995, peacefully at home, Cecilia Mary (née Anderson) aged 86, widow of William. Much loved mother of Hilary, Sandra, Morag and Tessa. Funeral Service at St Joseph's Catholic Church, Devizes, on Monday 11th December at 2.30 pm. Flowers or donations if desired to Marie Curie Cancer Care or Devizes Hospital.

PASCOE - William (Bing) Pascoe OBE, on December 2nd 1995, suddenly at home. Dearly loved husband of Margot and father of Christopher and Deborah. Service and cremation at Randalls Park Crematorium, Leatherhead today, Friday December 8th, at 12.30 pm. No flowers please but donations to The Royal London Society for the Blind c/o Garners Funeral Service, 53 The Broadway, Tolworth, Surrey KT6 7DW, tel: (0181) 390-4996.

POWELL - Jenifer Alma died peacefully on Tuesday December 5th 1995 in Fenland House, District Hospital, Peterborough, after a short illness, aged 77 years. Much beloved wife, mother and grandmother. So sadly missed by her family and friends. Funeral Service at St Andrew's Church, Thornhaugh, at 2.15 pm on Thursday 14th December 1995, followed by cremation at Peterborough Crematorium. Flowers welcome or donations can be made to The Mayor's Charities, Town Hall, Peterborough, in recognition of her long and loyal service to local government. Enquiries and flowers c/o Co-operative Funeral Service, Fitzwilliam Street, Peterborough. (01733) 345162.

RAYMOND - On December 5th 1995, peacefully at home after a long illness, Leslie Roy. Husband of the late Patricia, much loved father of Lesley and Louise and brother of Daphne and Pat. Funeral Service at Garston Crematorium on December 18th at 12.15 pm. Family flowers only. Donations, if wished, to British Heart Foundation, 14 Fitzhardinge Street, London W1H 4DH or Imperial Cancer Research Fund, Department 7, Freepost, London WC2A 3BR.

RENZLAND - Mark, restaurateur, died 29th November. Graveside funeral service on 11th December at 2 pm at Richmond/East Sheen Cemetery, Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey (access to the left of Courtlands). Flowers welcome or donations in lieu of flowers to the charity of mourner's choice.

SALISBURY - Mrs Patricia Ann of Chesterfield, passed peacefully away at 4.30 am on Thursday 7th December at The Ashgate Hospice, Old Brampton, Chesterfield. Members of her family were present when she died. Service at 1 pm on Thursday 14th December at Barlow Church, Chesterfield, followed by cremation at Brimington Crematorium Chesterfield.Family flowers only. Donations to Ashgate Hospice Please

SMITH - Laurence Michael, peacefully in St Albans City Hospital on December 6th. Much loved husband of Marjorie and father of Deborah and Adrian. Funeral at St Nicholas Church Harpenden on Thursday December 14th at 1.30 pm. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to St Nicholas PCC Development Fund. Donations and enquiries to L.C. Weston Funeral Directors, No 25.17 Leyton Road, Harpenden, Herts. tel: (01582) 712865.

TUCKER - On December 5th, Margaret Elizabeth (Liz) Tucker at her home in Mursley, Bucks., with very great courage and tenacity. Adored wife of Lt. Colonel Ken Tucker, mother of Michael and Philip and grandmother of Laurence and Edmund. She died following the principle which ruled her life "Never give in to adversity". Private family cremation on Thursday 14th December. A memorial service will be held at St Mary's Church, Mursley, at a date to be announced later, to which all will be welcomed. Family flowers only for the cremation. Donations if you wish to Willen Hospice, Milton Keynes or Star and Garter Homes for Servicemen.

URQUHART - Fred Burrows, peacefully at Roodlands Hospital, Edinburgh, on December 2nd 1995. Fred (Novelist and Short Story Writer), brother of Morris. Funeral at Seafield Crematorium, Edinburgh, on Saturday December 9th at 10.30 am, to which all friends are respectfully invited.

WESTBY - Hilda (née Hallam) of Farnsfield, Notts., aged 84, on December 5th. Widow of Wilfred, wise beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother of Ann, Kyra, Ruth, Samantha and Joe.

WILSON - Lady Wilson of High Wray. On 5th December peacefully at Lunesdale House, Hale. Valerie wife of the late Lord Wilson of High Wray, O.B.E., D.S.C. Beloved sister of Sylvia Harris. Service will take place at Kendal Parish Church on Monday 11th December at 11 am followed by committal at Lancaster Crematorium at 12.30 pm. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to Stick and Wheel Club c/o Fishwicks Funeral Service, 17 Park Road, Milnthorpe. tel: (015395) 63108.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

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OBITUARIES

JAMES RESTON

James Reston, former columnist, Washington bureau chief and and executive editor of *The New York Times*, died in Washington on December 6 aged 86. He was born in Clydebank, Scotland, on November 3, 1909.

AFTER Walter Lippmann had retired to New York in 1967, James Reston was rated as the best informed and most influential journalist in Washington. Entirely lacking Lippmann's *hauteur*, he brought very much the same air of authority to everything he wrote. His commentaries, especially on foreign affairs, were well known and widely appreciated outside the United States — indeed, many of them ran in *The Times* in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

"Scotty" Reston — the sobriquet was an allusion to the land of his birth — was always the complete professional. Even in the days of his greatest grandeur as the man who effectively ran *The New York Times*, he thought nothing of sitting alongside much humbler colleagues on the press benches at a national party convention. (It was, indeed, from the Republican one at Miami Beach in 1968 that he produced his famous line about Richard Nixon's victory amounting to "the greatest comeback since Lazarus".)

All his life he was the possessor of a puckish humour and modesty which lent charm and sophistication to his writing. As a stylist, he shone like a good, original deed in the drab, formula world of American journalism: he was the most literate of columnists — his only rival being Joe Alsop. If he had a weakness, it lay perhaps in his reluctance to give offence — although a liberal, he took pride in being thought acceptable by all shades of Washington opinion. By the end of his 50-year career he had, in fact, become "the quintessential Washington insider".

Perhaps, though, that was inevitable in the case of a man who had started out as a serious journalist on the diplomatic beat. Reston was only 28 when he was first sent to London by the Associated Press in 1937 to mix sports coverage with reporting on the British Foreign Office. He did the latter so well that within two years he had been invited to join the London bureau of *The New York Times*. He continued working in London until 1940, reporting on the Blitz — about which he also wrote in his first book *Prelude to Victory* (1942). There was never any doubt about Reston's pro-British sympathies — but that, again, was hardly surprising.

James Barrett Reston was the son of a Scottish machinist and his, if anything, even more strong-minded Presbyterian wife. When their son was a year old, the family emigrated to the United States — times were hard on the Clyde before the First World War. But within a year his mother's ill-health had brought about a return to Scotland and the young Reston's early schooling (until the age of 11) took place at Leven Academy in Alexandria in what is now Strathclyde. It was only in 1920 that his parents returned to the United States, settling with their son and daughter in Dayton, Ohio.

One action they took early on — the taking out of naturalisation papers — was to spare their son (who automatically thereby became an American citizen) the sort of embarrassment that was to affect his great friend Alistair Cooke when he changed his nationality at just about the grimmest point of the war. In Reston's case, as an American citizen, he could safely be seconded from his job in the Washington bureau of *The New York Times* to the Office of War Information. It was while working for this organisation back in London that he was first brought into touch with the man who was probably to have the greatest influence on his meteoric rise within the paper, the publisher and president of *The New York Times* Arthur Hays Sulzberger. (Reston was to remain close to the Sulzberger family throughout his career.)

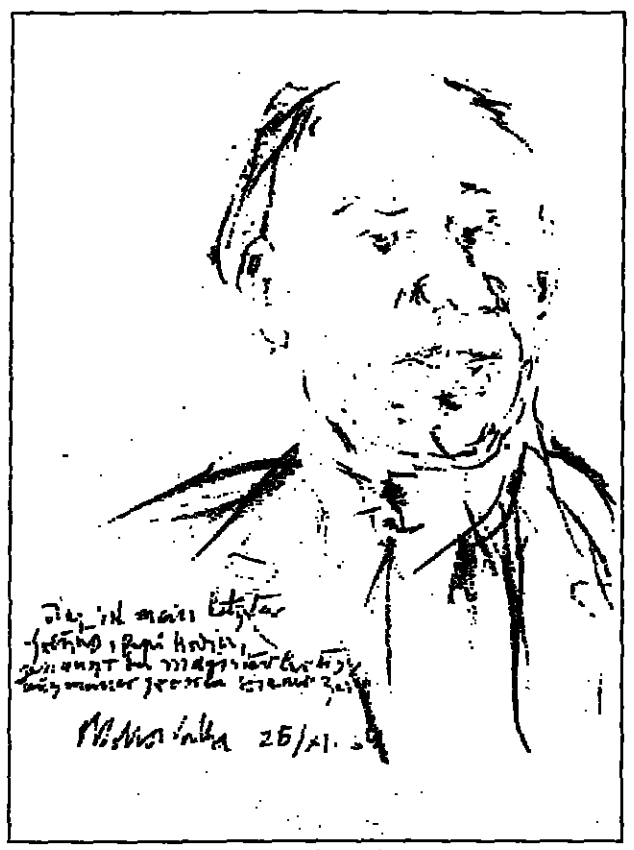
Once the war was over in 1945, the first plum job given to Reston was that of national correspondent — but he had already gained some amazing scoops out of the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks conference setting up the United Nations. The general suspicion at the time — made specific by the then US Secretary of State, Edward Stettinius — was that Reston had secured his leaks from the British Embassy. But 47 years later, in his memoirs *Deadline* (1991), he felt able to reveal his source, and it turned out to be a member of the Chinese delegation (who conveniently had been before the war a copy boy on *The New York Times*). In 1945 Reston won the first of his two Pulitzer prizes for his coverage of this conference.

In 1953 he was promoted from diplomatic correspondent to being a columnist and chief of the large *New York Times* bureau in Washington. This tied him more closely than hitherto to the American political scene. Sometimes, in his earlier role, he had appeared on BBC Television to comment on an international issue; but, whatever his criticisms might be at home, he was never to be drawn into disparaging American policies before a foreign audience. In his columns, too, his constant purpose was not to denounce but to be informative, to give perspective and meaning to the news — and he never minded if that also made him sometimes seem bland. It was a measure of his dedication to his craft that he continued with his column even when summoned to New York and forced to take on the post of executive editor in 1968. For Reston this was not an entirely happy experience, and he returned with relief 13 months later to his natural home, Washington, where he went on writing regularly until 1987.

A second Pulitzer prize had been awarded to him in 1957 for his coverage of the impact of Eisenhower's illness on the working of the American government machine in 1956, and he won several awards from the Overseas Press Club of New York for his articles on foreign affairs. A small, sprightly man with a self-deprecating smile, he did not feature much on the Washington cocktail circuit; but no correspondent in Washington was read more intently by his colleagues, especially those of the foreign press, some of whom had the reputation among their rivals of being "Scotty Reston rewrite men". A lively concern for the trends and practices of American journalism — as reflected in his book *The Artillery of the Press* (1967) — made steady demands on him as a lecturer, and he was awarded many honorary degrees by American universities.

James Reston is survived by his wife Sally and their three sons.

JOSEF HODIN



A pencil portrait of Josef Hodin done by Oskar Kokoshka in 1964

Josef Hodin, art historian, died in London on December 6 aged 90. He was born in Prague on August 17, 1905.

A LEADING European art critic, Josef Paul Hodin witnessed and bore testimony to some of the most exciting developments in modernist aesthetics this century. A German Jew brought up in Czechoslovakia, he lived as a young man in the flourishing cultural centres of Europe — in Dresden, Paris and Berlin. Thus, though under the stern direction of a father who believed that a man should have a profession — Hodin read law at Charles University in Prague — he never subsequently practised as a lawyer, falling passionately in love with art instead.

During the war Hodin settled first in Stockholm, where he joined the Czechoslovak Resistance, and then in London where he served as press attaché to the Norwegian government-in-exile. But as soon as peace came he left diplomatic service and settled in London to devote his life to the study of art.

His work as a critic gravitated in two principal directions. At a time when, in the wake of the dark age of Nazism, the Continent was looking towards Britain for a cultural lead, he fought for a recognition in England of art from East of the Rhine. Simultaneously, he strove to interpret the trends currently unfolding in British modern art.

As early as 1911 Kandinsky had characterised the dawning 20th century as the "century of the internal". The spontaneity and intensity of the rising Expressionist movement, gave primary importance to the inner world of emotion. Hodin explored this movement intimately, particularly through his friendship with Oskar Kokoschka, who lived in London from 1938 to 1954. Hodin devoted six studies to this painter, the most important being *Oskar Kokoschka: A Biography* (1966). This, like all Hodin's biographical studies, was characterised by an almost novelistic sense of the artist's character. Like the Expressionists themselves, he aimed to communicate the soul as much as the skill of the artist. Indeed, Kokoschka was to praise him for his "X-ray vision".

His studies of Kokoschka, together with other works on Edvard Munch, Isaac Grünewald and Ludwig Meidner (the latter two artists he also knew personally) were to establish him as an authority on Expressionism. However, he was also responsible for the introduction to British tastes — which until his arrival on the scene had looked to Paris as the measure of artistic truthfulness — of such influential European figures as Emil Nolde, Paul Klee and Ernst Beckmann. He then went on to encourage appreciation for a number of other important artists who had fled from Nazism, including the Dadaist Kurt Schwitters; the Constructivist Naum Garbo; and Moholy-Nagy of the Bauhaus.

When Hodin came to London, modern British art had not yet started to play a role in the international sphere. Most British painters were engaged as "war artists" commissioned to depict scenes of conflict and civil defence. There were few galleries in London, as well as a restrictive paper shortage and limited printing facilities.

Hodin was appointed as the first director of studies and librarian at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Influenced by such eminent art critics as Kenneth Clark and Herbert Read he delivered the first complete course in Britain on the history of the modern movement, relating trends in the visual arts to parallel ones in music, literature and philosophy. Later as co-editor (1956-66) of the leading European art periodical, *Quadrum*, he was quick to recognise and explore the aesthetics of newly emerging artistic groups.

Hodin had a house in Cornwall where his wife Pamela, whom he had married in 1944, had grown up. He spent much time there and became a close friend of Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth, both members of the then nascent St Ives group. His studies of them, written with their collaboration, had all the distinctive intimacy and insight which characterised his other works.

Another of Hodin's particular interests was contemporary sculpture. He wrote books about Elizabeth Frink, Lynn Chadwick, Henry Moore and Emilio Greco. But he also established his name as a writer of theoretical treatises which tackled the complex problems of contemporary aesthetics. The most important of these are *The Dilemma of Being Modern* (1956) and *Modern Art and the Modern Mind* (1972).

A great many honours were conferred on Hodin during his lifetime. In 1954 he won the first international prize for art criticism at the Venice Biennale with a contribution on Surrealism and Francis Bacon. He was made an honorary professor of Vienna University in 1975.

Josef Hodin is survived by his wife Pamela, and by a son and daughter.

KATHLEEN HARRISON

Kathleen Harrison, actress, died yesterday aged 103. She was born on February 23, 1892.

IN ANY popularity poll taken during the late 1940s, Kathleen Harrison and Jack Warner would have eclipsed an army of more glamorous actors. They were the stars of a popular series of films based around a middle-aged couple called the Huggetts, a works foreman and his suburban wife. The series was a spin-off from the film *Holiday Camp* (1947), and included over the next few years *Here Come the Huggetts*, *Vote For Huggett* and *The Huggetts Abroad*. These in turn spawned *Meet the Huggetts*, a BBC radio series.

The role of Ma Huggett established Kathleen Harrison as one of the most accomplished comediennes of her period, although theatregoers had long been aware of her talents. If during her early days she was relegated to playing domestic servants, she proved at length that her range was wider than unimaginative casting directors had decreed. Whatever she did, she was engagingly natural and persuasive, and her sound technique could transform a mediocre script into something special.

Although she was born in Blackburn, the daughter of an engineer, Kathleen Harrison was brought up in London from the age of five, after her father became borough engineer for Southwark. There was no tradition of acting in the family, but her father was a wonderful mimic. Educated at Clapham High School, she trained for the stage at RADA during the First World War. This came about after her father, who sat on the borough council, befriended a fellow councillor who was married to the actress Helen Haye. She was a teacher at RADA, and the family connection inspired the young Kathleen to apply.

It was at RADA that Kathleen was rehearsing *Pygmalion* one day when George Bernard Shaw arrived to watch proceedings. He told her to go out onto the Old Kent Road and just listen to the women talking. This was sound advice, and Harrison became adept at playing Cockneys. The typecasting she later fell into was partly of her own devising during these student days. Harrison longed to play romantic parts, but found herself petrified with fear during love scenes. So instead she opted for tiny parts such as the maid, making up for her lack of lines by getting the character just right.

At first, however, it seemed that she would have no career at all. Her parents had not been keen for her to go onto the stage, and were relieved when she married, in 1916, John Back of the Western Telegraph Company. He took her to live with him in Buenos Aires and Madeira, and she was out of England for some years. But by the early 1920s her husband was unemployed and, with two sons and a daughter to keep, it was imperative that she find work. After a year in the provinces, she began, in 1927, a long period in London theatres, at first playing mainly useful domestics. They were small parts, but showy, and she gained good notices for them.

During the 1930s she acted in two plays by Emlyn Williams, as Mrs Terence in *Night Must Fall* (Duchess, 1935) and as the housekeeper Mrs Watty in *The Corn is Green* (Duchess, 1938). After Williams, she was taken up by Terence Rattigan, and scored an instant success as the tail-gunner's wife in *Flare Path* (670 performances at the Apollo from April 1942). During the war she toured with Ensa, and appeared in Noël Coward's *In Which We Serve*.

She had her biggest theatrical break in 1946, playing Violet, the old housemaid, in Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy*. The part required an emotional scene in which she returns from court to tell the family that the schoolboy has been acquitted of theft. It was a five-minute tour de force, which left the audience — and the other actors — drained and stunned. That virtuoso display firmly established her in the hierarchy of London actresses, but the Huggett series in the late 1940s really compounded her reputation with a much wider audience.

Among her later stage work were 800 performances in N. C. Hunter's *Waters of the Moon* at the Haymarket (1951), and the role of a blunt ex-chorus girl in Noël Coward's *Nude With Violin* (Globe, 1956). One of her rare classical roles was Mrs Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer* at the Young Vic (1972).

Although Harrison had made her screen debut with a film called *Our Boys* in 1915, her film career did not really start until late middle age. Then, after the success of the Huggett series, she was inundated with scripts. She was particularly proud of her work in dramatised versions of Dickens (appropriately, considering that she had been born some twenty years after Dickens had written his last novel). Among these were the film versions of *Oliver Twist* (1948), *Scrooge* (1951) and *The Pickwick Papers* (1952), and television productions of *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *Our Mutual Friend*.

More work on television followed, including *Mrs Thursday* in 1966, in which she played a Cockney charwoman who suddenly inherits a fortune. The show was a phenomonal success and within six weeks had knocked *Coronation Street* from its usual perch at the top of the ratings. That year, she vowed never to stop working, but gradually she eased up on commitments, and a few years later stopped altogether.

Kathleen Harrison routinely deducted six years off her age — following the fashion among actresses of her generation — giving her year of birth as 1898. She only admitted to the deceit three years ago when she turned 100.

Her husband died in 1960. She is survived by a son and a daughter, another son having predeceased her.

ON THIS DAY

December 8, 1987

This topical article was written by the Member of Parliament for Sedgefield, Mr Tony Blair.

FEEDING THE TOLL OF FIRE DEATHS

He was a bouncer in a Manchester nightclub. He finished work and arrived home, sober, about 4am. His wife and two young children were sleeping upstairs. He had a quick meal, smoked a cigarette in the living room, stubbed it out in the ashtray, and went to bed. The ashtray fell into the settee, the cigarette still just alight. The settee began to burn. For about two hours it smouldered, until suddenly it caught fire. Within three minutes, the bouncer and his wife awoke, dimly aware something was wrong. They opened their eyes. Six inches above their faces was a pall of thick, black smoke. Frantic, they divided, she crawling to the window, he to fetch the children. He never made it and neither did the children. Seconds after waking, they were dead. The firemen found them later, huddled together in the bathroom——not burnt, but poisoned by the fumes. Around 300 such deaths happen every year, involving domestic furniture set ablaze either by cigarettes, matches, electrical faults or other causes of fire. The tragedy is that many die needlessly. Most modern furniture is stuffed with foam so highly flammable that within seconds of catching fire it creates an inferno. It also gives off carbon monoxide and cyanide; two or three inhalations are fatal for an adult. Yet furniture manufacturers continue to use this foam though its dangers are well known and though there are now on the market combustion-modified foams which have a proven ability to contain fires and to save lives. It is a scandal on which the government has been slow to act. Regulations were first passed in 1981. They have largely failed. The government will, however, legislate again in early 1988. But new evidence indicates that this legislation may be as flawed as its predecessor. The public often thinks of the government as some vast clinical machine dealing with problems in an orderly fashion. In fact, being composed of human beings, usually with too much to do in too little time, governments respond primarily to pressure. If it's in the news, it must be dealt with. A disaster occurs; an outcry follows; a solution must be found or something which resembles a solution. When, as here, death happens by twos or threes, the headline is not large enough, the pressure is insufficiently concentrated. Seven years and perhaps as many as 2,000 deaths will have passed between the 1981 regulations and those due next year. Do we have to wait another seven years before we get it right?

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 98 of the Insolvency Act, 1986, that a meeting of the creditors of the above named company will be held at the offices of Poppleton & Appleby, 32 High Street, Manchester M4 1QD on Wednesday 20 December 1995 at 12.00 noon, for the purposes mentioned in Sections 99, 100 and 101 of the said Act.
Pursuant to Section 98, Subsection (2)(a) of the Act, Mr P Lomas of Poppleton & Appleby, 32 High Street, Manchester M4 1QD is appointed to act as the Qualified Insolvency Practitioner who will furnish creditors with such information as they may reasonably require.
Dated 5th of December 1995.
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD
Mr K.A. Brierley. Director.

HUDSON LIMITED
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 98 of the Insolvency Act 1986, that a meeting of the creditors of the above named company will be held at the offices of Leonard Curtis & Co., situated at 30 Eastbourne Terrace, (2nd Floor) London, W2 6LF, on 18th December 1995 at 12.00 noon for the purposes provided for in Section 98 et seq.
A list of names and addresses of the above company's creditors can be inspected at the offices of Leonard Curtis & Co, PO Box 553, 30 Eastbourne Terrace, (2nd Floor), London W2 6LF, between the hours of 10.00 am and 4.00 pm on the two business days preceding the Meeting of Creditors.
Dated 4th December 1995.
Alan George Pattison, Director.

THE INSOLVENCY RULES 1986
RULE 4.182(A)
JOINT CHARITY CARDS ASSOCIATES LIMITED
In Members' Voluntary Liquidation
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Miss J B Stephenson, Licensed Insolvency Practitioner, of Neville Russell, 246 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 4PB, was appointed Liquidator of the above named company following an Extraordinary General Meeting of the company on 6 November 1995.
The Liquidator gives notice pursuant to Rule 4.182(A) of the Insolvency Rules 1986 that the creditors of the company must send details in writing of any claim against the company to the Liquidator at the above address by 28 December 1995. The Liquidator also gives notice under the provision of Rule 4.182(A)(6) that she intends to make a distribution to creditors who have submitted claims by 28 December 1995 otherwise a distribution will be made without regard to the claim of any person in respect of a debt not already proved.
No further public advertisement of invitation to prove debts will be given.
Note
This notice is purely formal. All known creditors have been, or should be, paid in full.
Date: 4 December 1995
J B Stephenson
Liquidator

LEGAL NOTICES

The Insolvency Act 1986
Rule 2.10
Notice of Administration Order
In the matter of
La Fornaia Limited
Nature of Business - Bakery
Administration Order Made 30 November 1995
Signed D Nisbet & A R Price Date 30 November 1995
Joint Administrators

PUBLIC NOTICES

FASS, STANLEY SOLOMON and DOREEN of 60 ELSWORTHY ROAD, LONDON NW3 died on 14TH OCTOBER 1992 and 12TH MAY 1992 respectively, particulars to ROBERT BRAND & CO, 17 BENTINCK STREET, LONDON W1M 5RL before 10 FEBRUARY 1996

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BACK ISSUES of Newspapers available. Tel: 0800 906609

JANET GLOVER sends her love and best wishes to all her friends and relatives for Christmas but will not be sending presents and cards this year. Love to all from - Janet.

KAT 1 I love my love with all my love, an angel through and through, but if you knew my love my love, then you would love her too.

HELPING HOUSE THE HOMELESS
Donations are urgently needed to enable us to buy more houses and rescue more families in urgent need of support. Help us face the problems of homelessness by naming Church Housing Trust as a beneficiary in your Will. Details from
CHURCH HOUSING TRUST
Sutherland House
70-78 West Hendon Broadway
London NW9 7BT

Good Health in Old Age
Help us to deliver the greatest gift of all
Every donation or legacy makes a difference
RESEARCH INTO AGEING
Improving the Quality of Later Life
DEPT TI, FREEPOST, LONDON EC1B 1AD
Registered Charity No. 277468

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE RESULTS
The National Autistic Society
Drawn on 30 November 1995
First Prize
Ticket No B117378, Lincolnshire
Runners Up Prizes
Ticket No L495882, Hertfordshire
Ticket No A017467, London
Ticket No C382358, Kent
Ticket No E411834, Lincolnshire
Ticket No A040785, Hereford
Ticket No B124880, Co Antrim
Ticket No A021165, West Yorkshire
Ticket No B125485, East Sussex
Ticket No C371408, London
Ticket No B145881, Wiltshire
Ticket No B125882, East Sussex
Ticket No L481156, Middlesex

PLEASE SUPPORT ANIMALS IN NEED
We provide a lifeline to over 3,000 animal casualties each year. Compassion and care alone will not feed them this winter.
Please help by sending a donation to:-
Burstow Wildlife Sanctuary,
(Dept TM), Church Lane,
BURSTOW,
Surrey, RH6 9TG
Reg. Charity No. 281078

Remember The Donkeys And We'll Remember You!
Over 6,700 donkeys have been taken into care many from lives tormented by cruelty and neglect. A donkey is never turned away from our Sanctuary and never put down unless there is no longer any quality of life.
We need your help to continue rescuing donkeys and to secure their future on one of our nine farms. A bequest to the donkeys will help immensely and your name will be inscribed on our Memory Wall and will be blessed at our annual St Francis Day Memorial Service.
A copy of our "Guide to Making a Will" is available on request.
The Donkey Sanctuary,
(Dept TM), Sidmouth,
Devon, EX10 0NU.
Tel: (01395) 578222
Enquiries to Dr E. D. Svendsen, MBE
Reg. Charity No. 264818

THE TIMES TODAY

FRIDAY DECEMBER 8 1995

NEWS

Europe set on collision course

■ France and Germany yesterday put themselves on a collision course with Britain by setting out a joint programme for deeper European integration that envisages a common immigration policy, the extension of qualified majority voting and a far greater role for the European Parliament.

The key elements of the reforms, outlined in an open letter to their European partners, are opposed by the British Government and will outrage Euro-sceptics...... **Pages 1, 12, 19**

Gangland hitman lures three to death

■ A gangland hitman who lured three criminals to a rendezvous in a lonely country lane and shot them as they sat in their car was being hunted by police. The bodies were found by a farmer, slumped in a Range Rover in a lane close to the A130 between Basildon and Chelmsford in Essex.................. **Page 1**

Bridgewater case

Michael Howard decided provisionally not to send the Carl Bridgewater murder case back to the Court of Appeal for a second review. The families' solicitor is seeking judicial review..... **Page 2**

MP's admission

Silvana Ashby, wife of the Tory MP David Ashby, told the High Court she was pleased when he admitted he was homosexual because it meant there was nothing wrong with her.......... **Page 3**

Beef assurance

While British food manufacturers insisted that all their beef products are completely safe, hundreds of schools decided unilaterally to stop serving it or introduced partial bans... **Page 4**

Unhealthy longevity

Men and women are living longer but getting no healthier, according to a government survey. The extra years of life are years with a disability............... **Page 5**

Jail suicides

Drug abuse and violence are rife in Doncaster jail, Britain's largest private prison. It has the highest suicide attempt rate in the country............................ **Page 6**

MoD thwarted

Ministry of Defence investigators have failed to gain access to the Swiss bank accounts of Gordon Foxley, a former top official jailed for corruption .... **Page 7**

Budget gains

More people think the Chancellor's policies will benefit them personally than at any time since the last election, although the public believes Labour would manage the economy best, a MORI poll found........ **Pages 1, 8**

Mimi manoeuvres

Mimi Papandreou is busy inside the Onassis Cardiac Centre trying to ensure her political survival in the event of her husband's death. The Prime Minister remains critically ill............ **Page 11**

Cassandra Kohl

Helmut Kohl's Cassandra-like statement that European integration has become a matter of war and peace conceals a deeper concern and a real historical resonance......................... **Page 12**

French strikes grow

France faced a fresh rash of protests and demonstrations. A mediator was appointed in the conflict with striking railway workers........................... **Page 13**

Young Tigers

The Tamil Tigers followed their rejection of an amnesty by the Sri Lankan Government with a poster camaign urging boys of 14 and over to join the war .... **Page 14**

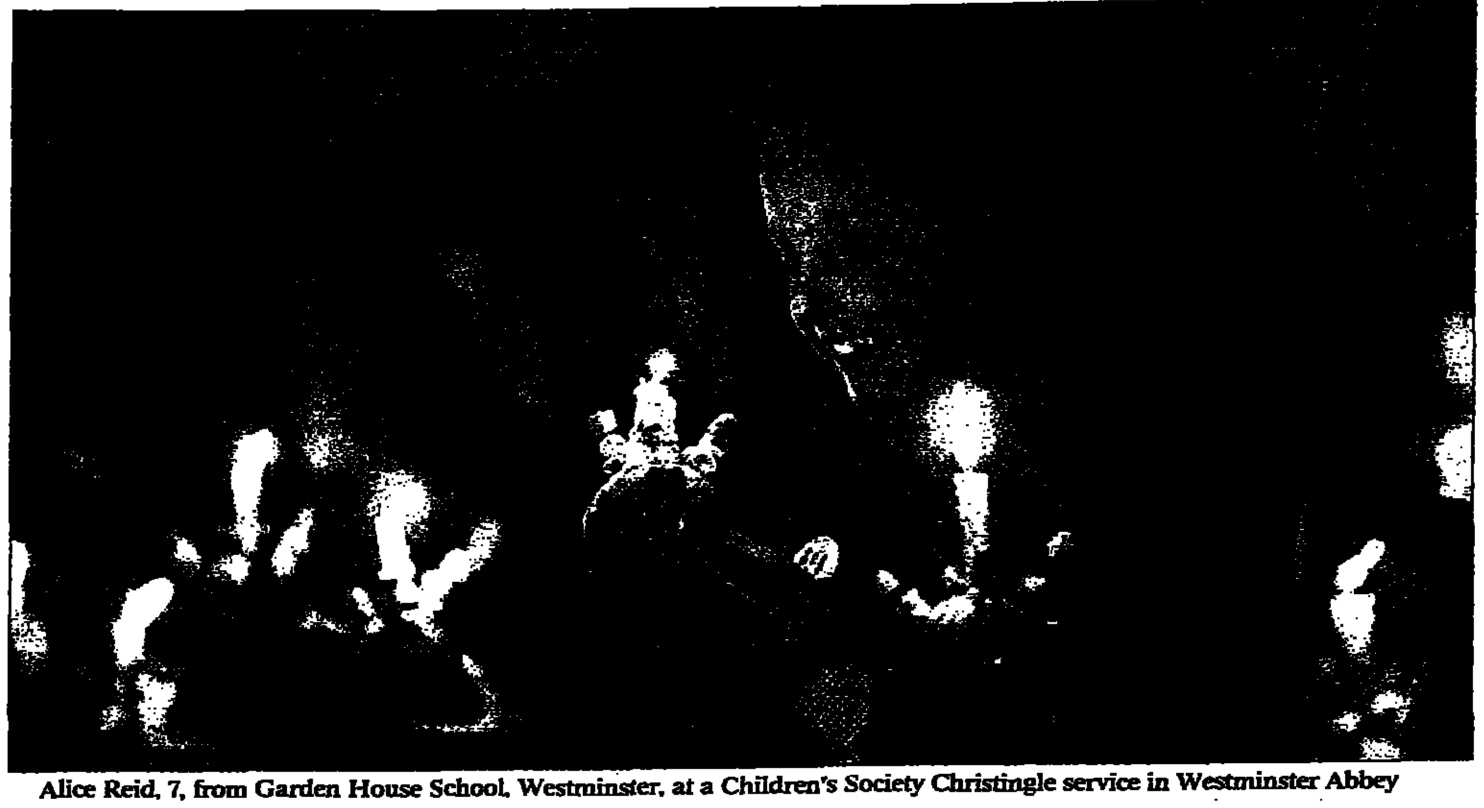
Gingrich scrutiny

Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, is to be investigated by an independent counsel for alleged tax law violations........... **Page 15**

For Sale: one Santa needing a grotto

■ A sale at Christie's today is devoted exclusively to Christmas. Among the lots is a 6ft Santa Claus, which for many years cheered shoppers outside Burton's, a grocery and confectionery business in Smithy Row, Nottingham. The owner, John Weedon, is running down his stock before retirement. The figure is estimated to fetch £1,000 to £1,500 .... **Page 7**

MICHAEL POWELL



Alice Reid, 7, from Garden House School, Westminster, at a Children's Society Christingle service in Westminster Abbey

BUSINESS

Works councils: British Telecom will announce the formation of a European works council covering all the company's UK and Continental employees .... **Page 23**

Accountants: The £105 million award against Binder Hamlyn has prompted accountants to become ordinary companies instead of partnerships...................... **Page 23**

Littlewoods: The 32 family owners of the Littlewoods empire voted overwhelmingly to keep the pools and home shopping retail group private................................ **Page 23**

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index fell 23.3 points to 3639.5. Sterling's trade-weighted index fell 0.1 points to close at 82.8 after a fall from $1.5407 to $1.5378 and from DM2.2217 to DM2.2161 ..... **Page 26**

SPORT

Football: Leicester City are taking legal advice after Mark McGhee, their manager, resigned. He is now expected to apply for the vacant post at Wolverhampton Wanderers........................ **Page 44**

Cricket: John Crawley, expected to replace Mark Ramprakash in the next Test match in South Africa, was out for six against Boland at Paarl .... **Page 44**

Tennis: Pete Sampras, of the United States, pulled out of a lucrative Grand Slam Cup quarter-final against Goran Ivanisevic, of Croatia, complaining of a knee injury .... **Page 44**

Football: Kevin McCarra asks where now for Paul Gascoigne, after his dismissal against Borussia Dortmund .... **Page 39**

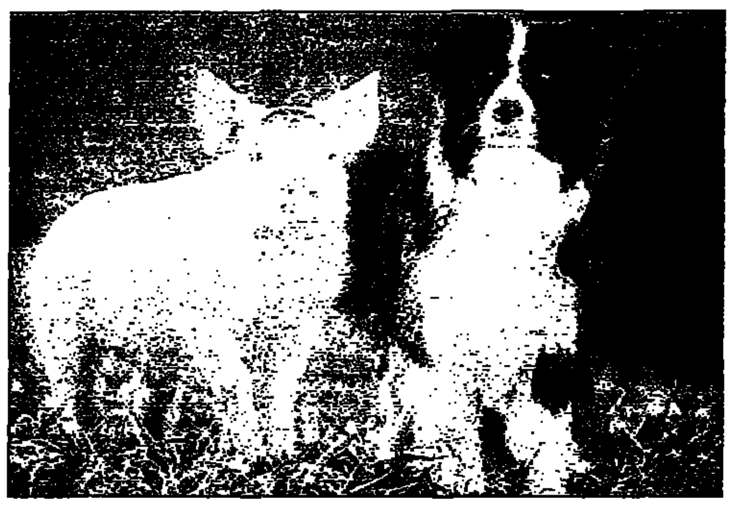
ARTS

Let there be light: Using £500,000 in lottery money, Wolverhampton is about to "enhance its cultural identity" by flooding its key public buildings with artistic lighting .... **Page 36**

Theatrical debut: In Wales, Ralph Steadman makes his first foray into the world of theatre design, but his sets and costumes for *Gulliver's Travels* leave something to be desired .... **Page 36**

Forgotten Sixties: The Beatles are everywhere this Christmas. But what about Twinkle and the Applejacks, doomed to has-been limbo? They had No 1 hits, too..... **Page 37**

Belgian treat: Flanders Opera presents a rare and enjoyable staging of Korngold's early opera, *Die tote Stadt* .... **Page 38**



TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

■ FREE TICKETS
Take your family to see *Babe*, the Christmas movie hit — 100 tickets to be won

■ PLUS ...
The good events guide — 100 other things to do during the festive season

FEATURES

Valerie Grove goes travelling with John Prescott — squashed together on the Tube, delayed at the airport, then on a flight to Brussels — talking about jazz, diving and poetry................................. **Page 16**

Covering up: Rachael Tapsell spent five months in Afghanistan working as a nurse. She talks about the practical problems and unexpected humiliation she experienced wearing the Islamic veil.... **Page 17**

EDUCATION

Assisting pupils: How will independent schools fare if Labour wins the next election and scraps the assisted places scheme?..... **Page 35**

Meaning of Christmas: Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, kings — and the baby lying in a manger. But do primary schools place enough emphasis on what the story is really all about? .... **Page 35**

THE PAPERS

Beef is still good meat. However, the debate about it will have been productive if it causes us to ponder the means by which the meat we eat is obtained. Giving cattle feed which contains sheep brain — the original cause of BSE — is hardly good husbandry.

Many people will think more carefully about the merits of traditionally reared and organic meat because of BSE. If we become more informed consumers, that must be to the good — *Evening Standard*

[illegible]

Preview: Nashville's finest turn out for an Aids awareness concert: *Red Hot and Country* (BBC2, 11.50pm). **Review:** Lynne Truss thinks that Baden-Powell deserves better of Channel 4.......................... **Page 43**

[illegible]

Lest ye be judged

The struggle for constitutional advantage between executive and judiciary is natural, continuous and will long outlast this Government........................ **Page 19**

Pounds and Euros

The advocates of a single currency say that member countries will have their economies invigorated by all this. It is true that opportunities for hoisting prices invariably invigorate the alert entrepreneur........................... **Page 19**

Living doll

Fashion victims need not look like famine victims. And parents can play a part by a decision this Christmas to go on a Barbie-buying strike.......................... **Page 19**

[illegible]

BERNARD LEVIN

For 34 years Tiny Rowland cultivated his company, and now he sees it in other hands. Was I not right, all those years ago when I was considering careers, to shun business?.......................... **Page 18**

BRUCE ANDERSON

It has been widely understood at least since the mid-1970s that good race relations depend on strict immigration control. The right of asylum is one of the last remaining means of undermining that control................................ **Page 18**

ANJANA AHUJA

Critics of *Galileo* point out that $1.4 billion dollars has been spent on the spacecraft. But we are continually seking answers to the most fundamental question, that of our existence. How are we to do that if we cannot explore the wonders on our celestial doorstep?....... **Page 18**

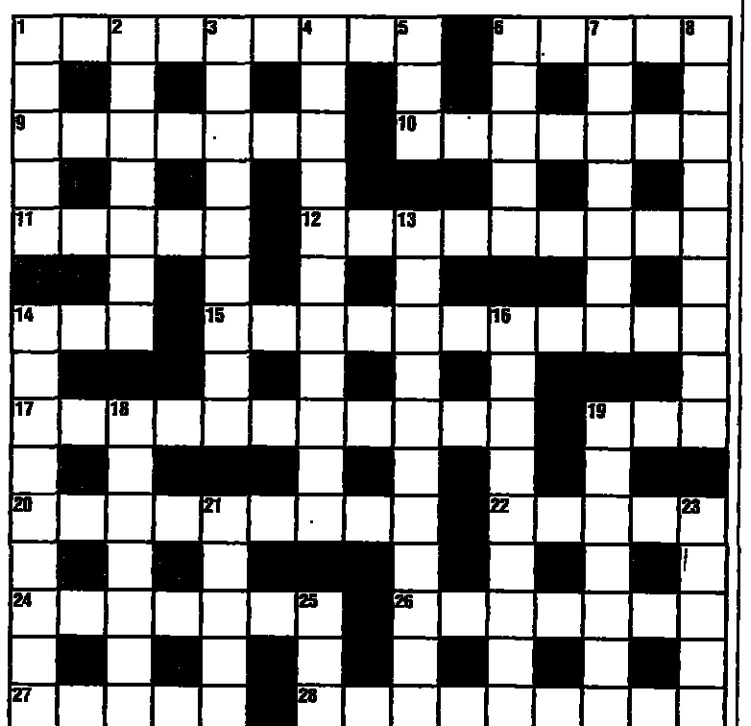
OBITUARIES

James Reston, former columnist of *The New York Times*; **Kathleen Harrison**, actress; **Josef Hodin**, art historian .... **Page 21**

LETTERS

Crown copyright and access to law; restoration damage to Vermeer; blow to UK film industry; prison budgets; Bennet entail....... **Page 19**

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,033



ACROSS

1 Tax official has to take a cutter to island (9).
6 Composer's ignorance? (5).
9 It's a mistake to tolerate such a frightful thing (7).
10 Merit of French answer (7).
11 Drag lake, in a manner of speaking (5).
12 Rude about vessel's bow being on the rocks (9).
14 Subordinate in Near East (3).
15 Hearing expert's making record with one in a studio, perhaps (11).
17 Lacking courage, paid only a little money (7-4).
19 Impair — with removal of odd bits? (3).
20 Part in musical providing a good example (9).
22 Preserve a lake as navigable waterway (5).
24 A declaration of friendship from Muslim region (7).
26 Inferior case for collector of coins (4,3).
27 Say in cathedral a lament for the dead (5).
28 Preacher has spoken in endless despair (9).

DOWN

1 Without honour, editor is in fix (5).
2 Relative getting up to dance in church (7).
3 Female will support Ancient Mariner (9).
4 Traditional steps taken as main record's broken (6,5).
5 Show no end of accord? (3).
6 He appears when don's out of town (5).
7 One serial broadcast from Mediterranean country (7).
8 Observer magazine (9).
13 Business manager is reserve member of team (5-6).
14 Liberal in seat appears to fall from grace (9).
16 Where one came to terms with stale fish (3,6).
18 A region tranformed in period long ago (4,3).
19 Take away one bishop inside this vehicle (7).
21 Like a mountain top seen here? Not very well (5).
23 Unit of light troops in place in Egypt (5).
25 Wood for steering-wheel not hard to find (3).

Solution to Puzzle No 20.032

C	O	C	K	P	I	T	■	P	R	O	S	A	I	C
H		H		R		R		I		R		U		L
R	U	I	N	A	T	I	O	N	■	B	A	T	H	E
O		A		C		S		■		I		O		A
M	O	N	E	T	■	Y	A	C	H	T	S	M	A	N
E		T		I		L		O		■		A		E
■	C	I	R	C	U	L	A	R	L	E	T	T	E	R
A		■		A		A		N		A		■		S
D	O	U	B	L	E	B	R	E	A	S	T	E	D	■
V		N		■		L		R		Y		X		B
A	B	S	O	R	B	E	R	S	■	G	L	O	V	E
N		I		U		■		T		O		T		A
C	O	Z	E	N	■	P	R	O	V	I	D	I	N	G
E		E		I		A		N		N		C		L
S	I	D	E	C	A	R	■	E	N	G	R	A	V	E

Times Two Crossword, page 44

TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0891 500 followed by the appropriate code:

Greater London	701
Kent,Surrey,Sussex	702
Dorset,Hants & IOW	703
Devon & Cornwall	704
Wilts,Gloucs,Avon,Soms	705
Berks,Bucks,Oxon	706
Beds,Herts & Essex	707
Norfolk,Suffolk,Cambs	708
West Mid & Sth Glam & Gwent	709
Shrops,Herefds & Worcs	710
Central Midlands	711
East Midlands	712
Lincs & Humberside	713
Dyfed & Powys	714
Gwynedd & Clwyd	715
N W England	716
W & S Yorks & Dales	717
N E England	718
Cumbria & Lake District	719
S W Scotland	720
W Central Scotland	721
Edin S Fife/Lothian & Borders	722
E Central Scotland	723
Grampian & E Highlands	724
N W Scotland	725
Caithness,Orkney & Shetland	726
N Ireland	727

Weathercall is charged at 39p per minute (cheap rate) and 49p per minute at all other times.

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic/roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the appropriate code:

London & SE traffic, roadworks	
Area within M25	731
Essex/Herts/Beds/Bucks/Berks/Oxon	732
Kent/Surrey/Sussex/Hants	734
M25 London Orbital only	736
National traffic and roadworks	
National motorways	737
West Country	738
Wales	739
Midlands	740
East Anglia	741
North-west England	742
North-east England	743
Scotland	744
Northern Ireland	745

AA Roadwatch is charged at 39p per minute (cheap rate) and 49p per minute at all other times.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Falmouth, Cornwall, 7C (45F); lowest day max: Sennybridge, Powys, -2C (28F); highest rainfall: Littlehampton, West Sussex, .42in; highest sunshine: Jersey, 4.7hr.

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FORECAST

☐ **General:** most of England and Wales will have a dry day with some sunshine. There will be a few sleet or snow showers over northern England at first and some rain or sleet showers in the southwest during the day. One or two freezing fog patches over central and eastern England at first will mostly clear during the morning but freezing fog may become widespread at night.

Scotland and Northern Ireland will be fairly cloudy with some sleet or snow showers but there should be brighter intervals. The showers will be mostly confined to the Scottish islands by the evening.

☐ **London, SE England, E Anglia, Central S England, E Midlands, E England, W Midlands, Central N:** any freezing fog clearing slowly. Dry with bright spells. Wind easterly light. Max 3C (37F).

☐ **Channel Isles:** dry and bright. Wind southeasterly light or moderate. Max 4C (39F).

☐ **SW England, S Wales, Isle of Man:** cloudy with some showers. Snow on hills. Wind east to southeasterly, mostly light. Max 5C (41F).

☐ **N Wales, NW & NE England, Lake District, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Argyll, N Ireland:** cloudy with sleet or snow showers, mostly dying out later. Wind southeasterly light. Max 3C (37F).

☐ **Moray Firth, NE & NW Scotland:** fairly cloudy and showery, some snow, mainly on hills. Wind southeast to southerly light. Max 4C (39F).

☐ **Orkney:** rain and sleet showers. Wind south to southwesterly moderate. Max 5C (41F).

☐ **Outlook:** mostly dry, bright and cold but some areas of persistent freezing fog.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gale; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; sn=snow; s=sun; t=thunder

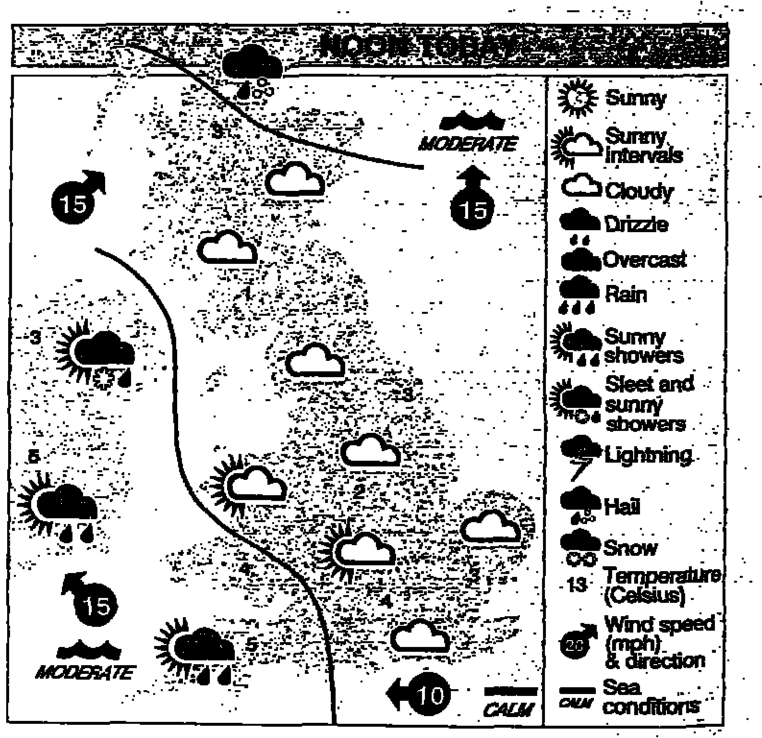
	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F			Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F	
Aberdeen	0.1	0.41	4	39	h	Littlehmptn	-	0.42	2	36	sn
Anglesey	4.5	0.03	2	36	s	Liverpool	-	0.02	0	32	sn
Aspatria	3.4	0.04	3	37	s	London	0.9	0.05	4	39	c
Aviemore	0.6	-	1	34	sn	Lowestoft	-	0.15	1	34	sn
Belfast	0.7	0.01	3	37	sh	Manchester	0.1	0.06	1	34	sn
Birmingham	-	0.02	0	32	sn	Margate	X				
Bognor R	-	0.34	1	34	sn	Minehead	0.9	0.06	1	34	sn
Bournem'th	-	0.08	3	37	sl	Morecambe	0.1	0.04	2	36	r
Bristol	-	0.01	1	34	sn	Newcastle	-	0.28	2	36	h
Buxton	-	0.20	1	34	sn	Newquay	0.1	-	5	41	c
Cardiff	0.2	0.04	1	34	sn	Norwich	-	-	1	34	sn
Clacton	-	X	3	37	sn	Nottingham	X				
Cleethorpes	X					Oxford	-	-	0	32	sn
Colwyn Bay	X					Penzance	0.9	-	6	43	b
Cromer	-	0.04	2	36	sn	Plymouth	X				
Doncaster	X					Poole	-	0.01	3	37	sn
Dunbar	X					Prestatyn	X	-	2	36	s
Eastbourne	X					Ross-o-wye	0.4	0.01	1	34	du
Edinburgh	4.0	0.13	5	41	b	Ryde	X				
Eskdalemuir	1.6	0.06	2	36	sn	Salcombe	X				
Exmouth	-	0.07	4	39	sn	Sandown	-	0.15	3	37	sn
Falmouth	1.6	-	7	45	b	Seuntn Snd	-	0.02	2	36	du
Fishguard	1.0	-	1	34	c	Scarboro'	-	0.29	1	34	sn
Folkestone	-	0.01	2	36	c	Shanklin	X				
Glasgow	3.4	-	4	39	b	Shrewsbury	-	0.09	0	32	sn
Guernsey	4.1	-	5	41	s	Skegness	-	0.05	2	36	sn
Hastings	-	0.28	2	36	sn	Southend	-	0.06	2	36	c
Hayling I.	-	0.17	2	36	sn	Southport	X				
Herne Bay	-	0.02	1	34	du	Southsea	X				
Hove	0.2	0.01	4	39	sn	St. Ives	X				
Hunstanton	2.9	0.01	2	36	b	Stornoway	1.8	-	6	43	b
Ilfracombe	-	-	0	32	du	Swanage	-	0.27	3	37	sn
Isle of Man	0.1	0.30	4	39	sh	Teignmouth	-	0.02	3	37	sn
Jersey	4.7	-	3	37	s	Tiree	1.8	-	6	43	b
Kinloss	0.9	-	3	37	sh	Torquay	-	0.07	5	41	sn
Leeds	-	0.16	2	36	sn	Tynemouth	-	0.19	36		c
Lerwick	0.1	0.03	5	41	h	Ventnor	-	0.10	3	37	sl
Leuchars	2.1	0.25	5	41	sh	Weymouth	-	0.23	5	41	sn

ABROAD

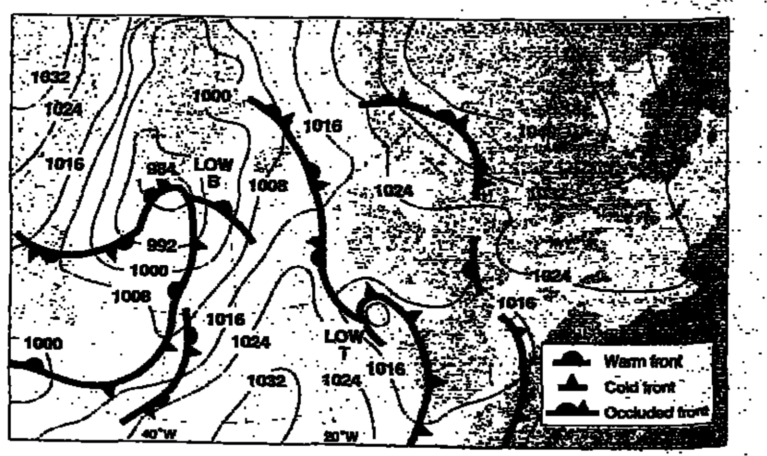
Ajaccio	12	54	f	Corfu	17	63	f	Madrid	6	43	f	Rome	14	57	f
Akrotiri	19	66	s	C'phagn	2	36	f	Majorca	13	55	s	S Fr'isco	15	59	c
Alex'dria	21	70	f	Dublin	4	39	c	Malaga	16	61	s	S Paulo	25	77	f
Algiers	14	57	f	Dubrovnik	10	50	r	Malta	14	57	r	Salzburg	-3	27	c
Amst'dm	-4	25	s	Faro	14	57	r	Melb'rne	16	61	f	Santiago	20	68	s
Athens	15	59	f	Florence	8	46	f	Mexico C	20	68	s	Seoul	1	34	s
B Aires	33	91	f	Frankfurt	-3	27	c	Miami	27	81	f	Sing'por	27	81	f
Bahrain	20	68	r	Funchal	16	61	c	Milan	6	43	f	St'kholm	-2	28	c
Bangkok	29	84	s	Geneva	1	34	c	Montreal	-2	28	-	Strasb'rg	0	32	c
Barbados	29	84	f	Gibraltar	16	61	f	Moscow	-8	18	sn	Sydney	24	75	f
Barcelona	9	48	f	Helsinki	-6	21	sn	Munich	-4	25	c	Tangier	17	63	s
Beirut	18	64	s	Hong K	19	66	s	N Delhi	22	72	s	Tel Aviv	18	64	s
Belgrade	0	32	f	Innsbrck	-1	30	s	N York	5	41	f	Tenerife	22	72	s
Berlin	-6	21	sn	Istanbul	13	55	f	Nairobi	26	79	f	Tokyo	13	55	s
Bermuda	19	66	s	Jeddah	29	84	s	Naples	15	59	f	Toronto	-2	28	f
Biarritz	7	45	f	Jo'burg	21	70	f	Nice	10	50	s	Tunis	15	59	c
Borde'x	4	39	s	Karachi	29	84	s	Oslo	-3	27	c	Valencia	10	50	f
Brussels	-3	27	sn	L Angels	16	61	f	Paris	0	32	c	Vanc'ver	1	34	f
Budapest	-1	30	sn	L Palmas	21	70	f	Peking	4	39	s	Venice	7	45	f
Cairo	21	70	f	Le Touquet	0	32	f	Perth	30	86	s	Vienna	0	32	sn
Cape Tn	24	75	c	Lisbon	11	52	f	Prague	-5	23	c	Warsaw	-7	19	f
Ch'church	16	61	c	Locarno	5	41	f	Reykjavik	3	37	f	Wash'ton	4	39	c
Chicago	0	32	f	Luxembg	-3	27	c	Rhodes	17	63	s	Wel'ngton	16	61	f
Cologne	-3	27	c	Luxor	25	77	s	Rio de J	27	81	f	Zurich	0	32	c

Temperatures at midday Wednesday. X = not available

NOON TODAY



Changes to chart below from noon: low B will move northeast, filling later; low T will drift south and fill; a new high will develop over Britain during the weekend



HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT	TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	2:13	6.81	2:33	6.75	Leith	2:56	5.31	3:12	5.40
Aberdeen	1:43	4.16	1:59	4.25	Liverpool	11:46	9.03	-	-
Avonmouth	7:42	12.86	8:03	12.66	Lowestoft	9:57	2.40	10:06	2.58
Belfast	11:34	3.57	11:55	3.24	Margate	0:24	4.60	0:43	4.52
Cardiff	7:40	11.97	8:00	11.68	Milford Haven	6:43	6.80	7:03	6.65
Devonport	6:08	5.39	6:28	5.18	Newquay	5:31	6.57	5:50	6.39
Dover	11:36	6.48	11:57	6.56	Oban	6:01	3.99	6:25	3.94
Dublin	-	-	0:18	4.11	Penzance	5:12	5.31	5:27	5.18
Falmouth	5:38	5.10	5:53	4.73	Portland	6:59	2.12	7:19	1.89
Glasgow	1:11	4.43	1:22	4.76	Portsmouth	11:48	4.61	-	-
Harwich	0:11	3.93	0:29	3.89	Shoreham	11:47	6.01	-	-
Holyhead	10:49	5.46	11:07	5.25	Southampton	11:16	4.49	11:36	4.33
Hull	6:51	7.00	7:04	7.18	Swansea	6:50	9.16	7:11	9.01
Ilfracombe	6:26	8.90	6:48	8.74	Tees	4:06	5.02	4:21	5.15
King's Lynn	6:51	6.32	7:07	6.42	W'ton-on-Nze	0:05	4.03	0:23	3.98

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises: 7.52 am
Sun sets: 3.52 pm
Moon sets 8.35 am
Moon rises 5.31 pm

London 3.52 pm to 7.53 am
Bristol 4.02 pm to 8.03 am
Edinburgh 3.40 pm to 8.31 am
Manchester 3.50 pm to 8.12 am
Penzance 4.20 pm to 8.08 am

Last quarter December 15

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On track for fitting reward at the Hong Kong races

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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY DECEMBER 8 1995

BT's works council blow to social chapter opt-out

By Our Industrial Editor

BRITISH TELECOM will today announce the formation of a European works council covering all the company's UK and continental employees in a move which deals a blow to the Government's opt-out from the EU social chapter.

BT's move makes it the largest company in Britain to introduce European-style information and consultation arrangements for its employees, and will provide a significant boost to the adoption by UK companies of European works councils (EWCs) in spite of the Government's social chapter opt-out.

Senior BT managers will today tell the 135,000 employees by means of briefing meetings, letters and e-mail of its decision to set up an EWC, to be called the BT European consultative council, after long negotiations with the unions.

Ministers will be angered by BT's move, in which Sir Iain Vallance, the company's chairman, has been closely involved. Publicly, ministers claim the social chapter opt-out from the Maastricht treaty allows companies to reach voluntarily employee consultation arrangements to suit their own circumstances.

But privately, many are irritated at the growing number of UK companies that are introducing EWCs. They believe the growing take-up in Britain is undermining the opt-out, and providing support for the European Commission's insistence that the UK should abandon the opt-out in next summer's post-Maastricht inter-governmental conference.

After BT's deal with the Labour party on the information superhighway, which infuriated the Government because of its implicit assumption that Labour will win the next general election, ministers are likely to be particularly concerned by the company's EWC deal — and in particular by the prominence it gives to BT's trade unions.

Though the EU directive requiring transnational companies to set up EWCs does not directly impact on UK companies, BT will insist today that despite its borderline eligibility under the directive, the company has a commitment to, and a tradition of, informing and consulting its employees, and so an EWC is appropriate. BT, which says the council will not replace existing negotiating machinery within the company, will say today its move places the company at the forefront of establishing voluntary information and consultation arrangements provided for within the EU's EWC directive.

BT's new council is thought to be the largest arrangement yet reached by a UK company with unions. Other companies that have already established EWC arrangements include Coats Viyella, Pilkingtons, United Biscuits, GKN and ICI. Under the terms of BT's EWC agreement with its unions, Sir Iain will himself chair meetings of the consultative council — the first set to take place early next summer.

Some unions have been suspicious of EWCs because they believe them likely to concentrate on small-scale issues, but BT's new council will examine issues central to its business, including the performance and overall strategy of BT on jobs, employment plans, and the commercial and regulatory environments affecting its Europe-wide operations.

Factories paid not to take electricity

By Christine Buckley

ELECTRICITY companies were yesterday forced to offer financial incentives to industrial customers not to take power as the price surged to record highs.

Norweb, which serves the North West, was offering businesses an incentive of £5,000 in the form of rebates not to take electricity in the peak hours.

Other privatised regional electricity companies were offering similar enticements in an effort to contain the financial damage caused by the surge, which has seen the wholesale electricity prices rocket to £1,108 per megawatt hour.

The cold snap, a temporary shutdown of more than one-quarter of nuclear output and the loss of supplies from France, are blamed for the spike in prices. At yesterday's level, industrial customers face average bills of around £3,500 an hour.

The regional electricity companies, which distribute electricity suplied through the National Grid, face significant losses on fixed price contracts which oblige them to supply power at vastly lower prices. Customers on fixed price contracts are estimated to pay just £350 an hour for their electricity.

John Caley, Norweb's electricity pricing manager, said: "We contacted several of our industrial customers who were capable of switching off power and offered them a rebate.

"The saving we would make by not supplying power at peak prices on a medium-sized business would be about £10,000 so we offered to split the difference."

Yorkshire Electricity, which operates in a similarly industrial area, offered similar inducements in an effort to stem losses.

A spokeswoman said: "We have spoken to customers and offered rewards to reduce the amount of electricity they take." Yorkshire would not disclose the level of incentives. Neither would Southern Electric which said: "We have rung several of our larger customers because of the higher pool price and offered rebates."

Yesterday's manoeuvres raise the prospect of electricity companies being forced to make provisions against fixed price contracts, putting pressure on their ability to maintain strict controls on the price of electricity for private residential customers.

Last week, Hanson revealed that it was making provisions of £129 million against the value of long-term gas and electricity contracts entered into by Eastern Group, the regional electricity company it bought recently.

The provisions relate to the controversial gas take-or-pay contracts and long-term deals over the provision of electricity.

The price hike has fuelled criticism of the system of electricity pool pricing, the mechanism which sets the cost of power at half-hourly intervals.

Large users of electricity said they were outraged at the pool pricing hike. The Chemical Industries Association said: "We are extremely dissatisfied with the way the pool is operating. We have already met with Stephen Littlechild [the electricity regulator] and will seek further meetings."

Don McGarrigle, an independent energy advisor working with Castle Cement, said: "It is hard to imagine that the price has got to this level. We are used to spikey pool prices in the winter but this is totally unacceptable. There is something seriously wrong with the mechanism.

Andrew Bainbridge, of the Major Energy Users Council, said: "This is a serious situation. I can't think of another product where the price fluctuates so much."

The practice was believed to have spread across all regional electricity companies serving industrial areas. British Steel, which has fixed price contracts, said it had been asked to reduce its consumption while other manufacturers such as cement producers were also targeted by the electricity suppliers.

Pep plan, page

MICHAEL POWELL

Colin Smith, chief operating officer, Sam Jonah and Mark Keatley, chief financial officer

Ashanti makes agreed bid for Cluff

ASHANTI Goldfields, the goldmine group, has made an £80 million agreed takeover bid for Cluff Resources, which has mines in Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Ghana (Sarah Cunningham writes).

Ashanti, 41 per cent owned by Lonrho and 29 per cent by the Ghana Government, yesterday made a recommended one-for-12 share offer for Cluff, with a 105p a share cash alternative.

It has bought 26.6 per cent of Cluff from Hutchison Whampoa and a 2.2 per cent from Cluff directors. Sam Jonah, Ashanti chief executive, said: "Cluff adds to our reserves, has an interesting portfolio in Tanzania and a well-built base in Zimbabwe."

Pennington, page 25

Big Six legal shelter may surface offshore

By Jon Ashworth and Michael Horsnell

PRICE Waterhouse is set to unveil a solution to the incorporation debate that will be "innovative and a little unexpected". An announcement will be made on Monday.

The move accompanies growing speculation that an offshore financial centre, either the Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man, is preparing legislation that will allow firms to become limited liability partnerships.

The move, which follows the record £105 million award against Binder Hamlyn in the High Court, would provide UK accountants with the ideal solution to their problems. The Big Six firms are highly exposed to the threat of massive law suits, and adopting limited liability status would ring-fence partners from the threat of personal loss. It would not prevent firms as a whole from being sued.

Partners in the former BDO Binder Hamlyn face personal losses of £225,000 each in the wake of Wednesday's High Court ruling. The firm is confident it will win on appeal.

Lord Lane of Horsell, senior partner of Binder Hamlyn for 13 years until his retirement in 1992, said yesterday at his home in Woking: "I have no idea if I am liable. I have absolutely no comment to make."

Running for cover, page 27

Family votes for Littlewoods to stay private

By Sarah Bagnall

THE 32 family owners of the Littlewoods empire yesterday overwhelmingly voted to keep the pools and mail order retail group private. A majority of shareholders voted to reject unsolicited approaches from two rival bidders that valued the group at £1.1 billion.

However, the decision by the wealthy Moores family does not rule out a sale or a partial sale of Britain's biggest private company in the future. A vast majority of the family backed the board and Lady Grantchester, the matriarch of the group and daughter of the late Sir John Moores, the company's founder.

But the vote exposed the deep rift that still exists between the varying family factions over the long-term ownership of the retail group. Family members representing 20 per cent of the company's equity opposed the board, voting instead to put the group up for sale. They are believed to be Peter Moores, Sir John's son, and his two children Donatella and Alexis.

About 16 family members, including Janatha Stubbs, Sir John's other daughter, who flew in from Malta where she runs an hotel, attended the two-hour extraordinary meeting at Littlewoods headquarters in Liverpool. Many of the family brought their financial advisers, who together with trustees and the board swelled the ranks of those present at the meeting to about 50.

Leonard van Geest, chairman of Littlewoods, said: "The shareholders can now take their time to review what they wish to do without other pressures around." He said nearly 80 per cent of votes cast backed the board's recommendation that the company should not provide any information to a £1.1 billion consortium bid led by Barry Dale, the former chief executive who was fired in March.

A separate resolution put forward last week by Peter Moores was rejected by a similar proportion of votes. This was that the company should prepare a sales memorandum and consider in detail all potential bids for parts or all of the company. This rules out a £1.1 billion rival approach made to the board last week by N Brown and Iceland. The spokesman for the consortium said it was considering its options.

Pennington, page 25
Dynasty returns, page 27

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100	3639.5	(-23.3)
Yield	3.95%	
FT-SE A All share	1778.74	(-9.50)
Nikkei	19412.32	(+344.46)
New York:		
Dow Jones	5168.06	(-31.07)*
S&P Composite	617.07	(-3.11)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	5$\frac{13}{16}$%*	(5$\frac{3}{4}$%)
Long Bond	111$\frac{11}{32}$*	(111$\frac{19}{32}$)
Yield	6.04%*	(6.03%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	6$\frac{7}{16}$%	(6$\frac{15}{32}$%)
Liffe long gilt future (Dec)	111$\frac{1}{32}$	(111$\frac{9}{16}$)

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.5360*	(1.5420)
London:		
$	1.5363	(1.5429)
DM	2.2186	(2.2272)
FFr	7.6390	(7.6615)
SFr	1.7966	(1.8044)
Yen	155.75	(156.34)
£ Index	82.8	(82.9)

DOLLAR

London:		
DM	1.4438*	(1.4465)
FFr	4.9695*	(4.9800)
SFr	1.1695*	(1.1710)
Yen	101.42*	(101.60)
$ Index	93.8	(93.8)

Tokyo close Yen 101.40

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Feb)	$17.25	($17.25)

GOLD

London close	$388.75	($388.45)

* denotes midday trading price

Grid shares

Shareholders in regional electricity companies face paying income tax on the shares they will receive in the National Grid Company. Shares in the Grid are due to start trading on Monday.
Page 24

GEC advances

GEC, the defence and electronics giant, raised pre-tax profits 6.3 per cent to £402 million in its latest half year of trading. The group, however, said it had made no further progress over the succession of the managing director's job.
Page 25, Tempus 26

High street shop tills are starting to jingle

By Philip Bassett
Industrial Editor

HIGH STREET sales are surging ahead, according to new figures yesterday from the Confederation of British Industry — and sales are expected to strengthen in the run-up to Christmas.

Though the CBI's figures have been out of line with official sales data recently, the improvement in sales volumes shown in the confederation's latest distributive trades survey is expected by the City to be reflected in an increase in high street sales when the Government publishes its own retail sales figures next week.

Retail sales volumes rose last month by the largest amount since April, the CBI said. Its survey of 15,000 outlets in retailing, wholesaling and the motor trades showed that the balance of high street companies reporting higher sales volumes — those recording an increase set against those registering a fall — increased from 16 to 23 per cent.

Retailers expect the increase to continue in December in the crucial period before Christmas, with a balance of 28 per cent of those surveyed forecasting rising sales this month.

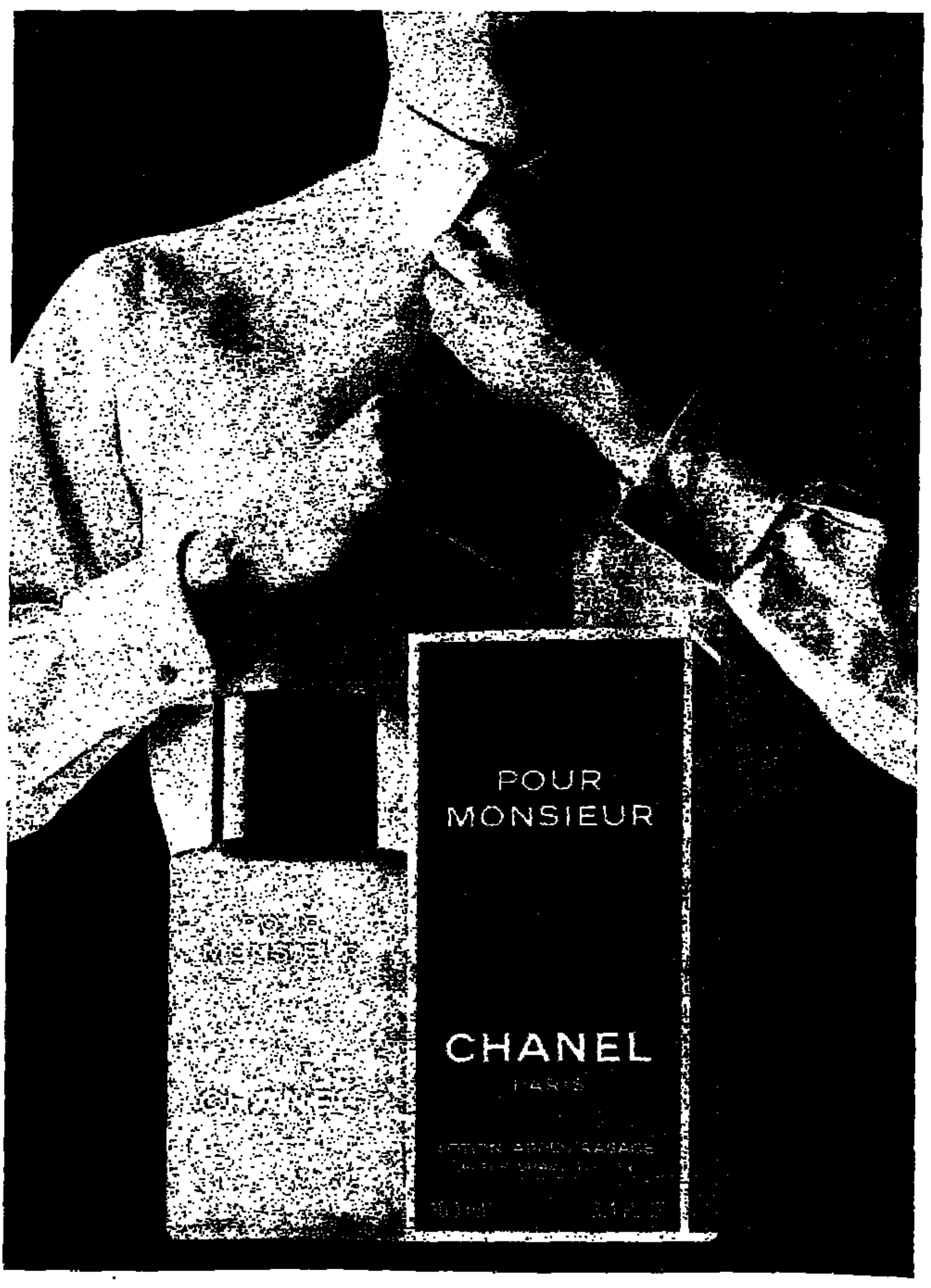
Though high street stores still regard sales as below average for the time of year, CBI analysts said the underlying trend in sales remained upward. Most retailing sectors saw some growth in sales compared with a year ago, with the largest increases indicated by booksellers and stationers, and grocers and clothing retailers. Only specialist food retailers reported lower sales.

CBI leaders urged caution over the figures since high street trade has been uneven since the start of the year, but welcomed the increase in retail sales. Alastair Eperon, chairman of the CBI's distributive trades panel, said the "genuine signs of a turnaround in retailers' fortunes" was encouraging. The edging up of retailers' prices was "not surprising", given the squeezing of margins over the past few years.

Shop prices saw the biggest increase since May 1993, but the CBI said that intense competition on the high street should limit the extent of price rises being passed on to customers. Even with this the warning note about inflation, the confederation repeated its post-Budget call for a half-point cut in interest rates.

City analysts suggested that the CBI's figures could preface a small rise in official retail sales data next week.

Looking across the three sectors, the balance of companies reporting an increase in sales fell back from 24 to 21 per cent. Though wholesalers' volumes rose, the increase was the smallest since February 1993 and motor traders reported the third successive monthly fall in annual sales.



POUR MONSIEUR
ELEGANCE IS TIMELESS
CHANEL

Pep plan to avoid National Grid tax

By Caroline Merrell

INVESTORS with shares in the regional electricity companies have until the end of today to put their holdings in a personal equity plan (Pep) to escape paying income tax on shares in the National Grid which is expected to start trading on Monday.

The National Grid is in the process of being demerged from the 12 regional electricity companies. Investors who bought shares in the Recs are being automatically issued with National Grid shares.

Unfortunately, the distribution of these shares brings with it an unexpected tax liability. The shares are to be treated as income for tax purposes, which means that higher rate tax payers face paying extra tax — equivalent to 60 pence per share, if 240p is assumed as the price of National Grid shares.

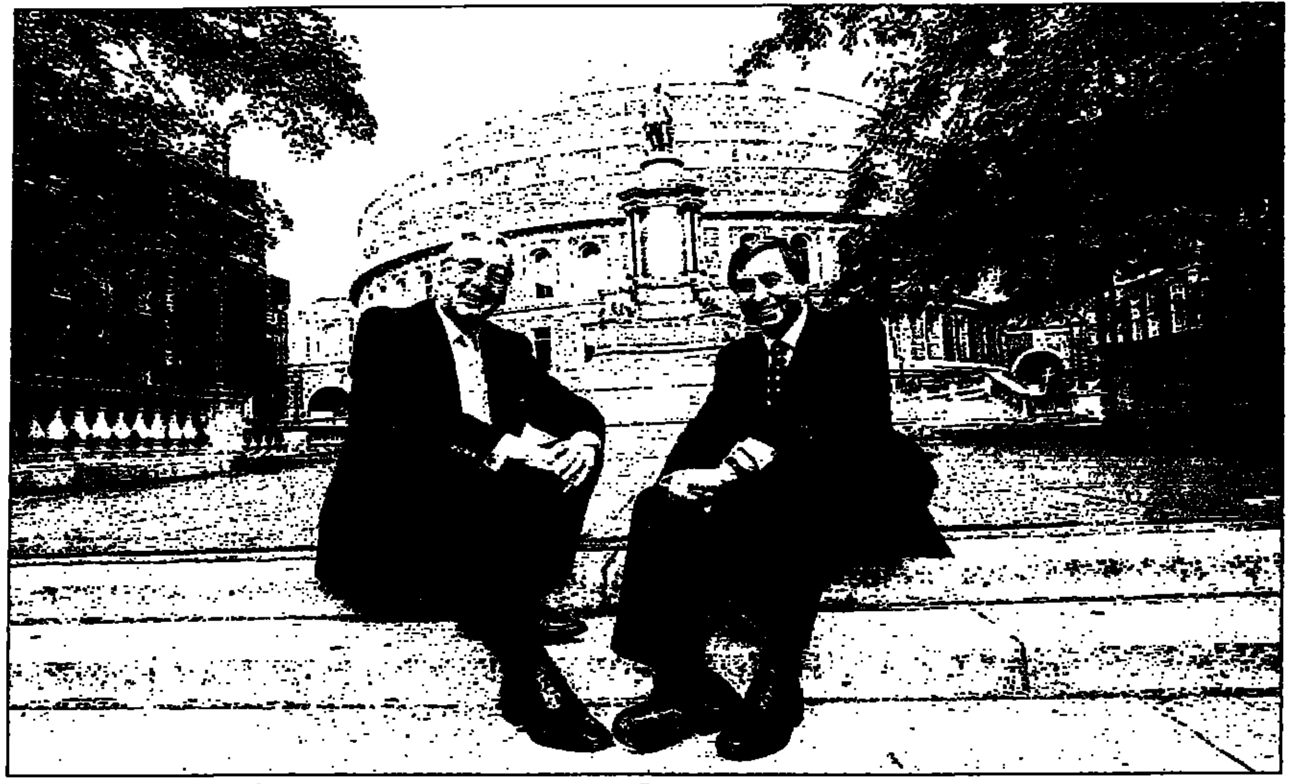
Stockbrokers advise putting the shares into a Pep to avoid the tax.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.18	2.02
Austria Sch	16.70	15.20
Belgium Fr	48.85	44.55
Canada $	2.213	2.053
Cyprus Cyp£	0.745	0.690
Denmark Kr	9.25	8.45
Finland Mkk	7.21	6.56
France Fr	8.09	7.44
Germany Dm	2.38	2.17
Greece Dr	387.00	362.00
Hong Kong $	12.58	11.58
Ireland Pt	1.02	0.94
Israel Shk	5.1700	4.5200
Italy Lira	2567.00	2412.00
Japan Yen	170.80	154.80
Malta	0.592	0.537
Netherlds Gld	2.652	2.422
New Zealand $	2.53	2.31
Norway Kr	10.41	9.61
Portugal Esc	245.00	226.50
S Africa Rd	ref.	5.41
Spain Pta	197.00	184.00
Sweden Kr	10.78	9.98
Switzerland Fr	1.94	1.76
Turkey Lira	refer	81399.0
USA $	1.640	1.510

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank plc. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

TONY WHITE



Francis Mackay, left, and Roger Matthews, Compass finance director, were bullish about prospects next year

Commission rates dispute hits Thomson and Cook

By Marianne Curphey

A DISPUTE over commission rates between Thomson, the UK's largest tour operator, and Thomas Cook, the travel agent, could cause both companies heavy losses over the peak Christmas booking season, industry sources said.

With the year's most important selling period only weeks away and the industry still smarting from one of the hardest summers on record, both want to resolve the dispute.

Thomson switched off Thomas Cook's access to its computer reservations system a week ago after discovering a Cook's internal memo urging staff to offer alternative accommodation to customers requiring a Thomson "exclusive" property. Staff were encouraged to sell alternative tour operators' accommodation because they offered more favourable commission rates.

Thomson holidays account for 15 per cent of Thomas Cook business, and a Thomson spokeswoman said yesterday: "I would have thought they could not afford to lose that busines, but by actively discriminating against us and switch selling customers who wanted to book a Thomson holiday they have broken their contractual agreement."

An analyst said yesterday the row began in January when Thomas Cook began todiscriminate against Thomson by offering 5 per cent discounts on its holidays, compared with up to 15 per cent off those of other operators.

"The combination of low commission and discounting meant some travel agents were being asked to sell Thomson holidays at a loss," he said. "Things have now come to a head but both Thomas Cook and Thomson will suffer if they do not resolve the issue by Christmas. It is unthinkable that two of the UK's largest travel-related companies might be refusing to do business with each other during the busiest time of the year."

Though Thomas Cook, currently the UK's third largest travel agent, had apologised, the row has continued. Cook said yesterday it wanted to negotiate but would not be "bullied" by Thomson."We are consulting our solicitors. We are willing to meet Thomson but will not do so until they allow us access to their computer reservations system."

Safe place sought for ITN shares

By Alexandra Frean
Media Correspondent

CARLTON Communications and Granada Group are seeking to set up an "arm's length" joint venture company to hold their "excess" shares in ITN.

The two broadcasters each hold 36 per cent of ITN, but, under the 1990 Broadcasting Act, must cut their individual holdings to 20 per cent. The deadline for a sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was extended by 12 months.

As this deadline looms, Carlton, acting with Granada, is understood to have proposed to the Independent Television Commission that each put its excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company. They would not be able to vote on those shares, but need not sell them cheap to meet the deadline.

Compass Group points ahead

By Alasdair Murray

SHARES in Compass Group, the catering and healthcare company, rose 4½p to 450½p yesterday as it reported a 31 per cent jump in full-year profits to £73 million.

Turnover rose 64 per cent from £918 million to £1.5 billion, reflecting a 250 per cent increase in contributions from North America after the £300 million acquisition of Canteen last year. There were also continued strong performances in the UK and Scandinavia.

Compass, of which Francis Mackay is chief executive, said that the purchase of Eurest for £590 million in September would add considerably to the group's strength in Europe next year.

The dividend increased 13 per cent to 7.6p. In the UK catering division, profits rose 13.5 per cent to £35.2 million, helped by a 4.4 per cent increase in margins to 7.1 per cent. In Europe, profits improved 21.3 per cent to £13.1 million, although margins slipped back slightly from 5.5 per cent to 5.3 per cent.

In America, like-for-like profits increased 23.2 per cent to £27.1 million and margins rose from 3.3 per cent to 3.9 per cent. Compass has recently won a £175 million contract to supply food to IBM, the computer company.

Profits in the healthcare division rose 8 per cent to £15.8 million. The company said that negotiations were in progress for the disposal of the healthcare interests for an estimated £200 million.

Compass was bullish about its prospects next year and said it would continue its international expansion, the acquisition of Eurest giving the company a presence in 19 European countries and eight others worldwide.

The company will also continue to push high-margin branding franchises such as Burger King, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell. The dividend will be paid on March 25.

Tempus, page 26

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Vauxhall workers to take pay action

VAUXHALL will lose more than £3.6 million worth of production today when employees end work two hours early as part of action over a pay dispute. The action will cost Vauxhall production of 140 Vectras at its Luton factory and a similar number of Astra models at Ellesmere Port. The 9,000 production workers are also banning overtime after rejecting a pay offer of 3.5 per cent plus the rate of inflation in a year's time.

Talks aimed at settling the dispute were adjourned last night and will resume next week. The company did not increase its pay offer nor accept a demand for a two-hour cut in the 39-hour week. A new offer of £500 per worker instead of a subsidised car scheme for employees with ten years' service was dismissed by Tony Woodley, the Transport and General Workers Union national secretary for the motor industry.

Call for docks talks

BILL MORRIS, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, is to seek talks with a docks company which sacked 300 workers for refusing to cross a picket line. Mr Morris called on the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company to agree to negotiations to resolve the two-month dispute before "irreparable harm" was done to the Port of Liverpool. The union agreed steps to relieve the hardship to families of the sacked dockers, who refused to cross pickets at another company in a separate dispute.

Taylor Woodrow deal

TAYLOR WOODROW, the construction group, has won a £4.5 million design-and-build contract for a new main stand at Derby County Football Club, the second phase of a plan to provide an all-seater stadium for 26,000 at the Baseball Ground. Taylor Woodrow has already converted the lower Toyota stand terracing to seating. The new 7,000-seater stand will house players' facilities, offices, a shop, executive boxes, a restaurant and directors' facilities. Work starts in February and should be completed early next season.

BT appoints Stentor

BRITISH TELECOM and MCI, America's second largest long-distance phone company, have appointed Stentor, the alliance of Canadian telecoms companies, as sales agent for their Concert services in Canada. Concert, launched by BT and MCI in 1984, offers global networks services, such as data transmission, to multinational corporations in competition with AT&T's WorldPartners portfolio. MCI, which is 20 per cent owned by BT, is in charge of marketing Concert in North America while BT sells it in Europe and Asia.

Victrex looks for £52m

VICTREX, the specialist plastics group formed after a management buyout from ICI in September 1993, will be capitalised at about £125 million when it is floated later this month. The company, which makes a high performance thermoplastic, is hoping to raise about £52 million through a placing and intermediaries offer. The prospectus sets out an offer range of between 155p and 170p per ordinary share. Victrex expects to receive net proceeds of £11.1 million. Dealings are expected to begin on December 21.

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هكذا من الأصل

☐ The Moores family fights on ☐ Wrong kind of privatisation ☐ Japan's imported stagnation

Littlewoods gets it right

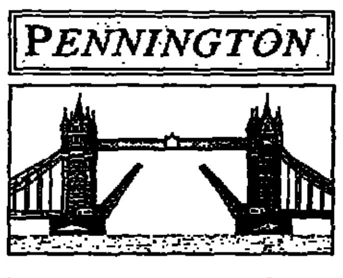
☐ THE Moores dynasty that controls Littlewoods, the UK's largest private company, may be divided, but it is not daft. In keeping with the family's passion for secrecy, Littlewoods' books have long been kept closed, particularly from the eyes of potential predators. The family holds sway over the books, but not over the tongues of executives who beat regular retreats, by choice or otherwise, from the house that the late Sir John built. Those no more with the Moores tell seductive tales of rich pickings in the shape of underutilised assets.

Barry Dale, Littlewoods former chief executive who was fired under mysterious circumstances last March, took but a matter of months to convince a host of City institutions that Littlewoods is an exciting enough play to warrant a sighting shot of more than £1 billion, subject to due diligence. The likes of Electra, Legal & General, the Prudential and Candover Investments couldn't wait to take a peek at Littlewoods' numbers. Banks eager to oil the wheels included Chemical, Deutsche, Fuji and NationsBank. *Mini* merchant bank, Dawnay Day, represented this band of venture capitalists which, optimisticly, dubbed themselves Bidco. *If prudent* institutions were prepared to sink such sums into the pools, mail order and retail chain conglomerate, that was good enough for N Brown, Sir David Alliance's mail order enterprise. With a nudge from Charterhouse Bank, of Woolworth revamp fame, an alliance was struck with Iceland, which, by way of insider credentials, operates food halls in about 40 of Littlewoods 128 stores. Sir David tentatively proffered £650 million for the pools and mail order operations, while Iceland wanted to chip in £450 million for the retail portfolio.

Younger members of the Moores family may yearn to cash in their chips, but yesterday's 80 per cent vote in favour of closing the doors on both unsolicited bids indicates that much of Sir John's wisdom has been passed down. If City institutions and entrepreneurs are willing to toss more than £1 billion on the table based on a less than complete knowledge of Littlewoods' books, it is not difficult to conclude that the intent is to snap up the Moores' birthrights on the cheap.

Michael Gatenby, ironically a former denizen of Charterhouse, has advised the family well. There never was any reason for the Moores to act in haste. A review of the family's options, including a partial flotation, is now the order of the day. Institutions were naive to imagine that a bid from Mr Dale, currently suing for wrongful dismissal, would find favour.

Season's greetings on the railways



☐ DOWN on the rails, Britain's train services have already glided effortlessly from seasonal track malfunction through seasonal equipment failure to seasonal passenger irascibility. In the High Court, arguments are being rehearsed for what may become the big excuse of the next decade: are our railways suffering from the wrong kind of privatisation?

Mr Justice Macpherson will decide today whether Roger Salmon, the rail franchising director, has interpreted his brief reasonably. Meanwhile, preliminary bids for the second batch of big franchises, including the crack East Coast Main Line and potentially lucrative Gatwick Express, must be on Mr Salmon's desk today. The train is behind schedule but the race is still on to start the majority of services on the way to privatisation by the Spring.

In this process, Mr Salmon cannot win. No-one will be able to judge whether he is doing his job well for years ahead. Meanwhile, he can be blamed for a wide variety of ills ranging from dodgy connections to last week's boring Budget.

Cuts in the road programme did not translate into tax goodies in part because rail subsidies will rise. Mr Salmon needs the extra subsidy to entice franchisees to take on all the routes and pay a privatised Railtrack for the privilege of running them. Officially, total subsidy is not fixed in advance. But the pressure is on to minimise it.

There's the rub. The structure of costs and risks has changed so much that no-one knows how much subsidy each route needs. So Mr Salmon depends on competing bids to deliver a reasonable answer. To stimulate competition, he wants to allow the most flexibility that ministers and the public will bear.

Once bidders are in, he can then weigh quality against subsidy. If qualifying bids demanding the lowest subsidy always win, however, travellers could in for more hassle, in terms both of service levels and the inevitable drive to cut costs. Train drivers and guards will not take lying down the sort of hefty cuts in real wages suffered by bus drivers since privatisation.

Cursed by deregulation

☐ DO-GOODERS are still intent on wrecking the Japanese economy. The OECD now expects that after four years of continuous stagnation, Japan will not even manage 2 per cent growth next year. Typically, it recommends more structural change, more deregulation, more efforts to curb bureaucratic influence over companies.

The annual OECD report on Japan tut-tuts over the family-centred distribution system. In this high turnover, space-saving system, "the number of stores per inhabitant was 27 per cent higher than in the weighted average for the remainder of the OECD area". Disgraceful.

Japanese policymakers ought to make the link soon. The deregulation America has forced on Japan has halved the potential growth rate. From making the yen international to axeing green belts, employees and small shops, this process undermines the quality that built modern Japan: an ability to combine stability with rapid change.

Ever greater uncertainty has sapped confidence, consumer spending, corporate investment and bank lending. Money piles up on parasitic Anglo-Saxon lines. The damage cannot be reversed, but Japan should better promote a welfare state and inflation than follow the OECD's suicide instructions.

Golden days

☐ ASHANTI'S successful pursuit of the company assembled from scratch by African mining buff Algy Cluff will go a long way to convert Ashanti from a hugely rich mine into a potentially powerful mining house with a strategic base in Zimbabwe. It should also be the trigger for the split of Lonrho's mining and trading interests. Dieter Bock and Ashanti never really fitted.

GEC rises to challenge of tough markets

By Christine Buckley

GEC, the defence and electronics giant, has combated difficult markets with increased strength after the purchase earlier this year of VSEL, the Trident submarine maker and naval shipyard, and taking a half share in Ferranti Thomson Sonar Systems.

The group, which yesterday said that there had been no further progress in the controversial succession procedure for managing director, over which one director has resigned, reported a 22 per cent rise in the value of its defence and electronic systems orders. It had orders worth £6.09 billion at September 30. That contribution took the order book for the whole group, which includes telecoms interests, power systems, general electronics and other products, to £13.7 billion, which is a record for the company, said Lord Weinstock, managing director.

Exports in the defence and electronic systems division for the six months to September 30 amounted to £334 million.

Weinstock: record orders

However, profits from defence and electronics nudged up only £1 million, to £80 million, after being constrained by development costs on several contracts.

GEC, which is locked in dispute with National Power over equipment it supplied for power plant, reported sales in power systems slightly up, at £1.74 billion, from £1.65 billion in the same period of the previous year. However, it said that the order booked had dipped slightly, to £6.2 billion. Competition also clipped margins in the power division, which operates as GEC-Alsthom, a joint company with Alcatel-Alsthom, of France.

The group is focusing much of its efforts on overseas sales, which already account for 70 per cent of its business. In power systems, it sees great potential in developing countries.

Such an international drive has also fuelled growth for GPT, its telecoms joint venture with Siemens, the German industrial giant.

The purchase of VSEL, of Barrow, is additional to GEC's Scottish shipyard interests of Yarrow. GEC naval shipbuilding received a boost from Brunei, which has ordered three offshore patrol boats.

With the VSEL purchase and the stake in Ferranti Thomson, GEC spent £740 million on acquisitions in the half year. It made £83 million from selling small businesses.

Overall, GEC raised pre-tax profits 6.3 per cent, to £402 million. The interim dividend, due on March 29, rises by 5 per cent, to 3.1p.

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Westbury homes in on a deal

By Martin Barrow

WESTBURY, the housebuilder, has agreed to buy Clarke Homes from BICC for £60.7 million, it was announced yesterday.

In addition, Westbury has agreed to pay BICC an additional £200,000 for every percentage point that the Halifax All Houses Buyers Index increases over 4 per cent in any of the three years from January 1, 1996.

The acquisition will be partly financed through a one-for-three rights issue at 150p per share to raise £32.2 million. Clarke has 2,228 plots of land with planning consent, most falling within Westbury's existing operating territory. It has incurred operating losses in each of the three years up to December 31, 1994, but Westbury said the purchase would enhance its earnings per share in the first full year.

Westbury expects to make an exceptional reorganisation charge of about £1.7 million in the current financial year related to the acquisition.

Westbury shares fell 6p to 176p yesterday. BICC closed 2p lower at 278p.

Country Casuals bid fails

By Our City Staff

COUNTRY Casuals Holdings, the ladies' fashion retailer, has thwarted a £26.8 million takeover bid by Ciro Holdings, an investment vehicle headed by John Shannon, a former chairman of Country Casuals.

Ciro disclosed yesterday that its bid, which was worth 140p a share in cash, attracted acceptances in respect of just 35 per cent of County Casuals.

This included Mr Shannon's own holding of 3.6 million shares, 18.8 per cent, and PDFM's 2.6 million shares, which were committed at the outset of the bid in October.

The news delighted the board of Country Casuals but was a blow for Mr Shannon, who had expressed confidence the offer would succeed.

Mr Shannon said: "I am very disappointed that a number of larger institutional shareholders did not see fit to accept what I believe was an offer which fully valued Country Casuals as it stands."

Shares in Country Casuals were unchanged yesterday at 137.5p.

Unigate raises £299m from first sale of Nutricia stake

By Sarah Cunningham

UNIGATE has sold most of its 29 per cent stake in Nutricia, the Dutch specialised food and baby milk company, raising £299 million.

Unigate expects to sell the rest of its holding in Nutricia, equal to about 2.9 per cent of the Dutch firm, within the next few weeks, bringing in a further £33 million.

The sale was achieved through the disposal of 6.209 million depositary receipts in Nutricia at 120 Dutch guilders each. The remainder of its stake will be sold through an overallotment option, excercisable until January 11, of 689,919 depositary receipts.

Unigate said that its offer had met with "favourable" responses from international institutional investors and institutional and retail investors in the Netherlands, and it was "confident" of placing the remaining receipts. Nutricia agreed to co-operate with the conversion of its shares into listed Nutricia depositary receipts. The Dutch company was carried in the Unigate group's consolidated balance sheet at £79.1 million.

Unigate, which made an after-tax profit of £46.6 million last year, announced its plans to sell the Nutricia holding last month, saying that it wanted to concentrate on activities over which it had direct control. The proceedings from the sale should finance "additional investment opportunities with potentially greater rewards for shareholders", the company said.

The British company has owned a significant stake in Nutricia since 1981 when it sold Cow & Gate to it and received company shares in return. Unigate increased the holding during the 1980s to reach a high point of 32 per cent.

In October, Nutricia completed the purchase of Milupa, the German baby food and milk company, diluting Unigate's holding in the process to 29.1 per cent.

GUS THE GREAT UNIVERSAL STORES P.L.C.

UNAUDITED RESULTS FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1995

HIGHLIGHTS

- **FRS 5 GROUP RESULTS**

	£M
– PRE-TAX OPERATING PROFIT EXCLUDING INTEREST	193.2 (+8.2%)
– EXTERNAL INTEREST RECEIVABLE	43.8
– TOTAL PRE-TAX OPERATING PROFIT INCLUDING INTEREST	237.0 (+5.4%)

- **EARNINGS PER SHARE FROM OPERATING PROFIT AFTER TAX INCREASED BY 8.6% TO 12.7P (1994 11.7P) AND FROM TOTAL PROFIT BY 5.4% TO 15.7P (1994 14.9P).**
- **INTERIM DIVIDEND PER SHARE 5P (1994 4.5P).**
- **FRS 5 MERCHANDISE, RELATED INCOME AND BUSINESS INFORMATION SERVICES TURNOVER £1,203M (1994 £1,151.7M). FINANCE DIVISION CONSUMER AND CORPORATE ADVANCES £351.4M (1994 £373.1M).**

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1995

	Six months ended 30.9.95 (Unaudited) £m	Six months ended 30.9.94 (Unaudited) £m	Year ended 31.3.95 (Audited) £m
Turnover excluding VAT	1,203.0	1,151.7	2,664.1
Cost of sales	659.5	632.2	1,460.4
Gross profit	543.5	519.5	1,203.7
Operating costs	(383.8)	(372.2)	(799.8)
Group property rental income (net)	33.5	31.2	65.1
Operating profit (+8.2%)	193.2	178.5	469.0
Net external interest receivable	43.8	46.3	91.9
Profit from trading activities	237.0	224.8	560.9
Add: Profit on sale of fixed assets	0.5	2.0	1.9
Total profit before taxation	237.5	226.8	562.8
Taxation – UK	62.4	61.4	146.4
– Overseas	17.6	15.9	45.3
	80.0	77.3	191.7
Profit for the period attributable to ordinary shareholders	157.5	149.5	371.1
Interim/annual dividends on ordinary shares	50.3	45.3	150.8
Retained profit	107.2	104.2	220.3
Special dividend paid – 30p per share (net)			301.7
Resultant transfer from reserve			(81.4)
Earnings per share	15.7p	14.9p	36.9p
Interim/annual dividends per share	5.0p	4.5p	15.0p
Total dividends paid and proposed	£50.3m	£45.3m	£452.5m

INTERIM DIVIDEND
The interim dividend will be paid on 29 March 1996 to shareholders on the register at the close of business on 20 February 1996.

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AT 30 SEPTEMBER 1995

	30.9.95 (Unaudited) £m	30.9.94 (Unaudited) £m	31.3.95 (Audited) £m
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets			
Freehold and long leasehold properties	1,066.0	1,033.9	1,030.0
Short leasehold properties	29.8	29.4	29.8
Plant, vehicles and equipment	117.0	102.0	116.0
	1,212.8	1,165.3	1,175.8
Investments (including share of retained profits of associated companies £2.1m; 31.3.95 £1.9m)	9.2	158.3	9.0
	1,221.8	1,323.6	1,184.8
Current Assets			
Stocks	363.1	333.6	284.6
Debtors (after provision for unearned finance charge £165m; 31.3.95 £146m)			
– due within one year	1,441.9	1,329.2	1,556.5
– due in more than one year	623.5	634.1	668.3
Gilt-edged securities and other listed investments	14.1	137.8	155.2
Bank deposits	1,056.3	1,064.1	728.9
	3,498.9	3,498.6	3,393.5
Creditors – falling due within one year	698.7	753.7	672.1
Net current assets	2,800.2	2,744.9	2,721.4
Total assets less current liabilities	4,022.0	4,068.5	3,906.2
Creditors – amounts falling due after more than one year	13.6	12.1	13.3
Provisions for deferred and other liabilities and charges	134.9	128.1	114.2
Accruals and collection costs	222.7	207.6	238.1
Minority interests	–	.1	–
	3,650.8	3,720.6	3,540.6
Capital and Reserves			
Called up share capital	251.4	251.4	251.4
Revaluation reserve	752.8	763.7	754.5
Profit and loss account	2,646.6	2,705.5	2,534.7
Equity shareholders' funds (see note)	3,650.8	3,720.6	3,540.6
Equity shareholders' funds per share	£3.63	£3.70	£3.52

Note: The comparison of equity shareholders' funds at September 1994 and March 1995 reflects the payment of a special dividend of £301.7m (30p per share (net)).

The full accounts for the year ended 31 March 1995 received an unqualified audit report and were filed with the Registrar of Companies. The interim accounts are unaudited and are not required to be submitted.
The figures at 30 September 1994 are presented on a comparable basis and have been amended to reflect the accounting policies detailed in the full accounts for the year ended 31 March 1995.

UNAUDITED ABBREVIATED CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1995

	Six months ended 30.9.95 £m	Six months ended 30.9.94 £m	Year ended 31.3.95 £m
Net cash flow from operating activities	218.8	171.7	409.4
Servicing of finance – share capital			
Annual dividends paid	–	–	(135.8)
Taxation			
UK corporation tax paid	(13.1)	(23.8)	(148.4)
Advance corporation tax paid on special dividend	(75.3)	–	–
Overseas tax paid	(14.4)	(14.4)	(45.9)
Tax paid	(102.8)	(38.2)	(194.3)
Investing activities (Operations)			
Tangible fixed assets – purchases	(64.6)	(37.0)	(83.6)
– sales	7.5	9.8	19.2
	(57.1)	(27.2)	(64.4)
Financing			
Principal payments under capital leases	(2.8)	(3.6)	(7.4)
Underlying trading cash flow	56.1	102.7	7.5
Special supplementary dividend paid	–	–	(301.7)
Investing activities (Funds)			
Net sales/(purchases) of gilt edged securities and investments	141.2	191.5	324.1
Reduction in holdings of Certificates of deposit	130.6	167.9	93.0
	271.8	359.4	417.1
	327.9	462.1	122.9
Opening cash (after exchange rate movement)	728.4	602.0	606.0
Closing cash	1,056.3	1,064.1	728.9

UNAUDITED MOVEMENT IN EQUITY SHAREHOLDERS' FUNDS

	Six months ended 30.9.95 (Unaudited) £m	Six months ended 30.9.94 (Unaudited) £m	Year ended 31.3.95 (Audited) £m
Profit for the period attributable to ordinary shareholders	157.5	149.5	371.1
Dividends – Interim	(50.3)	(45.3)	(45.3)
Final	–	–	(105.5)
	107.2	104.2	220.3
Special supplementary dividend	–	–	(301.7)
Currency translation differences on overseas net assets	3.0	(7.1)	6.9
Revaluation of properties	–	–	(8.4)
	110.2	97.1	(82.9)
Opening equity shareholders' funds	3,540.6	3,623.5	3,623.5
Closing equity shareholders' funds	3,650.8	3,720.6	3,540.6

UNAUDITED DIVISIONAL ANALYSIS 6 MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1995

	FRS 5 Turnover 1995 £m	FRS 5 Turnover 1994 £m	Trading Profit Before Tax Including Interest 1995 £m	Trading Profit Before Tax Including Interest 1994 £m
Home Shopping	870.3	868.1	93.6	96.4
Burberrys & Scotch House	124.0	102.2	26.9	21.2
Overseas retailing	100.7	91.4	18.5	14.9
Property rentals	–	–	31.5	29.7
Consumer & corporate finance, banking and business information services	108.0	90.0	66.5	62.6
	1,203.0	1,151.7		
Profit before tax from trading activities			237.0	224.8
GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS				
United Kingdom	856.4	840.2	187.0	183.5
Western Europe	207.9	188.3	20.9	17.5
North America	50.7	46.4	8.2	6.4
Far East & South Africa	88.0	76.8	20.9	17.4
	1,203.0	1,151.7		
Profit before tax from trading activities			237.0	224.8

TRADING REVIEW
The Group's five major trading divisions, detailed above, produced an FRS 5 pre-tax trading profit of £237.0m (1994 £224.8m) consisting of operating profit £193.2m (1994 £178.5m) and interest receivable £43.8m (1994 £46.3m). Lower interest receivable reflects the payment in March 1995 of a special dividend of £301.7m (30p per share (net)) and the cash flow effects of the related advance corporation tax.
The Group had a positive underlying cash flow from trading activities and maintained a virtually ungeared balance sheet. As hitherto no amount has been included in the balance sheet for the intangible worth of valuable trading names and lists of catalogue agents and customers.

HOME SHOPPING
The division continued to experience volatile trading conditions as demand remained affected by a cautious and selective customer approach with the prolonged period of hot weather a factor in reduced UK catalogue ordering. Operating profits were affected also by inflationary cost pressures for paper and print. The division's Continental European companies showed a modest growth in overall sales and operating profit in local currency terms reflecting in part the ongoing benefit from co-ordination with UK catalogue companies.
Agency strength was maintained at approximately last year's level with further marketing initiatives launched to promote direct sales in the UK. New interactive methods of shopping are being monitored and tested.
White Arrow delivery service expanded its third party business and made further investment in the latest distribution technology whilst other component parts of the division produced a small increase in pre-tax profit.

BURBERRY GROUP
Burberry Group produced another successful set of results with profits ahead in all sectors including an encouraging contribution from the Products and Manufacturing Division, which recorded a further improvement in productivity following new investment.
The South Wales factory, making the fast growing polo shirt range, made further progress and the Thomas Burberry collection continued its expansion. The collection of golf wear has been well received and further developments are in hand for additional lines. Royalty income advanced further as new agreements were signed and existing licences extended, the latter including the Japanese licence which now covers additional Scotch House merchandise and will include Thomas Burberry products for Autumn/Winter 1996. The retail division, including Scotch House, traded successfully in the UK and the USA and showed some modest improvement in Continental Europe where difficult trading conditions persisted. Four new stores opened in the UK, including Heathrow Terminal 1 and Gatwick, three in the USA, including Honolulu, and two franchise outlets in Paris. In addition there is a growing number of franchise outlets for Burberry products in the Far East mainly in Japan and Korea.

OVERSEAS RETAILING
The South African retail operation continued to make good progress and produced an encouraging result. Seventeen new shops will open this year as the company pursues effective marketing policies for both merchandise and financial services.
The Canadian company continued to experience difficult trading conditions and further contracted its activities. More resources were provided for Superior Acceptance Corporation the profitable consumer finance business.

CONSUMER AND CORPORATE FINANCE, BANKING, BUSINESS INFORMATION SERVICES AND PROPERTY RENTALS
General Guarantee Corporation achieved an increase in trading profit during a period in which consumer and corporate advances mainly for vehicles were somewhat lower reflecting both last year's strong demand and the widely reported reduction in non-fleet car registrations. Collections were ahead of the previous year as existing customers repaid debt, a reflection of controlled lending policies and spread of receivables, both key performance factors in the finance industry. Bad debt and operating expenses were closely monitored. The Group's reinsurance and banking activities made satisfactory progress. Superior Acceptance Corporation, the Canadian finance company, continued to expand adding 6 new offices to its branch network of 83.
CCN business services continued to make satisfactory progress with improved profit being achieved in the UK and overseas following further growth in the sale of products linked to an expanded European business database and Credit Card systems. Further investment has been undertaken in all areas of activity.
Property rental income, including acquisitions, showed an increase for the half year. The portfolio consists of 1,065 properties, of which 839 are freehold and 106 long leasehold, 80% occupied by the retail trade including 3 shopping centres comprising 173 units. Occupancy level remains high at 98.5%.

SUMMARY
The overall half year result again emphasises the value of the Group's policy of related diversification, investment in the latest technology to improve productivity and reduce overhead, with a targetted approach to merchandise and marketing.
Trading conditions remain highly competitive as reported at the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 1995. In a volatile market with a welcome low level of inflation the challenges ahead should not be underestimated.

BOARD PROPOSALS FOR 1996
Lord Wolfson of Marylebone will be 69 next year and accordingly has indicated his desire to take life more easily and retire from the Board in the summer of 1996. He was appointed a Director in 1952, a Managing Director between 1963 and 1981 and Chairman since that date, a total of some 44 years as a member of the Board, and Chairman of Burberrys from 1978.
The Directors express their appreciation for his outstanding contribution to the progress and development of the Group over this long period, which has seen the Company's market value, earnings and dividends per share, cash flow and net asset value grow substantially, with no call on shareholders for funding. Following Lord Wolfson's retirement they have unanimously invited him to become Honorary President and retain the benefit of his business experience in assessing overall trends in the market economy, related technological progress and property.
Lord Wolfson intends to devote more time to the ongoing Health, Education and Arts programmes of the Wolfson Foundation established in 1955 of which he was a founder trustee with his parents Sir Isaac and Lady Wolfson and since 1971 Chairman, as of the Family Charitable Trust.
The Board has invited Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale to succeed as Chairman by September 1996 prior to which he will become a non-executive Deputy Chairman from 1 April 1996. He joined the Company in 1960, was appointed a Director in 1973 and Chairman of the Home Shopping Division in that year. In 1978 he retired from the Board to become Secretary to the Shadow Cabinet and subsequently Chief of Staff in Mrs Margaret Thatcher's Office until 1985. In 1990 he was appointed Chairman of Next plc, rejoining the Board of this Company in 1993 as a non-executive Director on the recommendation of the Chairman.
The Board has approved also with effect from 1 April 1996 the appointment as directors of Mr A J Smart (Managing Director Overseas Retail Division) and Mr P L Weigh (Managing Director Consumer and Corporate Finance Division), at present Associate Directors.

STOCK MARKET PHILIP PANGALOS

Prices dip as hopes of early rate cut recede

GEC rose 12½p and reported new orders for VSEL's yard

SHARES in London slipped after a CBI survey pointed to the possibility of a retail upturn in the new year, thus dampening hopes of a near-term interest rate cut. An early sell-off in New York added to the sense of gloom.

Interest rate cut hopes were further subdued by Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, who dropped hints at a Treasury Select Committee that he does not want to take risks with inflation and is against a rate cut in the short term.

Few investors appeared willing to take fresh positions and the FT-SE 100 index ended near its lows, closing down 23.3 points to 3,639.5. Losses were limited for second-liners, with the FT-SE 250 slipping six points to 3,953.9. Volume was 751 million shares.

GEC, the electronics to defence conglomerate, was the largest company reporting yesterday, with first-half profits of £402 million (£378 million) and an interim dividend of 3.1p (2.95p) in line with City expectations. The shares advanced 12½p to 314p, on volume of 12.2 million, as Lord Prior, chairman, pointed to buoyant trading conditions, both now and in the future, and said the recent takeover of VSEL, the Cumbrian Trident submarine producer, was already paying off with substantial new orders rolling in.

Great Universal Stores, the home shopping to Burberry group, pleased investors with a better-than-expected advance in first half pre-tax profits to £237.5 million (£226.8 million) and improved interim dividend of 5p (4.5p).

News that Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, the chairman of Next, is to take up executive chairmanship from Lord Wolfson of Marylebone, his cousin, next September helped GUS shares to add 18p to 632p, on volume of eight million shares. Analysts hoped that the move may speed up the process of unlocking shareholder value.

Hopes of stronger management links with GUS helped **Next** to add 5p to 449p.

There were gains for most of the new FT-SE 100 constituents. **Argos** added 10p to 571p. **Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust** 2p to 161½p and **Smiths Industries** 5p to 618p, but **Pilkington** eased 2p to 191p and **Burton** held steady at 130p. Among those losing their top 100 status, **Arjo Wiggins** fell 7½p to 158½p, **De La Rue** 3p to 652p and **Inchcape** lost 6p to 211p.

Reed International was another casualty, losing 46p to 999p on talk of a Merrill Lynch downgrade on Elsevier and an American magazine report suggesting the group may suffer competition from the Internet. Elsewhere, **Unigate** dipped 2p to 416p on confirmation that the dairy to foods group had sold the bulk of its 29 per cent stake in Nutricia, the Dutch baby foods firm, for £299 million. Some 6.21 million shares were sold to international institutions and institutional and retail investors in The Netherlands through a global offering. Analysts expect Unigate to employ the sale proceeds, which could eventually reach £332 million, on a substantial European acquisition.

Cluff Resources, the UK company with gold mining interests in Africa, added 12p to 104p after Ashanti Goldfields, the London-based African mining group, emerged with an £80 million agreed bid, worth 105p a share. Investors are being offered one Ashanti share for every 12 Cluff shares, with a full cash alternative. Ashanti already owns 26.6 per cent of its target, having paid Hutchinson Whampoa £21 million for 20.3 million Cluff shares. Ashanti also speaks for another 2.2 per cent.

British Gas lost 3½p to 229p, on heavy volume of 24.5 million shares traded, with the stock depressed by a block of ten million shares at 228½p, said to have been placed by Merrill Lynch.

A trading update from **Blue Circle** sparked mixed feelings, with the shares falling 7p to 330p as the group warned of hefty restructuring charges. Blue Circle will incur a £55 million exceptional charge for restructuring of its UK and European heating businesses and an £8 million charge for a shake-up of its UK bathrooms operation. The costs will more than offset a £55 million credit on July's sale of its landfill businesses.

Elsewhere, **Westbury** slipped 6p to 176p as the housebuilding group announced a £32.2 million cash call, at 150p a share, to help to fund a £60.7 million acquisition of Clarke Homes from **BICC**, 2p softer at 278p.

Rank Organisation lost 10p to 415p, depressed by American selling and reports of reduce advice from NatWest Securities, while **Graham Group** fell 8p to 196p on talk of sell advice from Kleinwort Benson. A Kleinwort buy note helped **Provident Financial** to add 8p to 825p.

USM-quoted **Proteus International** tumbled 23p to 126p on news of a problem in the development of a DNA-binding drug, while **Wensum** lost 10p to 137p after the clothing group denied that it was in takeover talks.

Pet City made a sparkling debut on the Alternative Investment Market, with shares in the pet superstore group advancing to 358p, before settling at 350p, giving a 50p premium over the 300p placing price. **Megalomedia**, Maurice Saatchi's investment vehicle, ended 20p higher at 114p, after touching 127p.

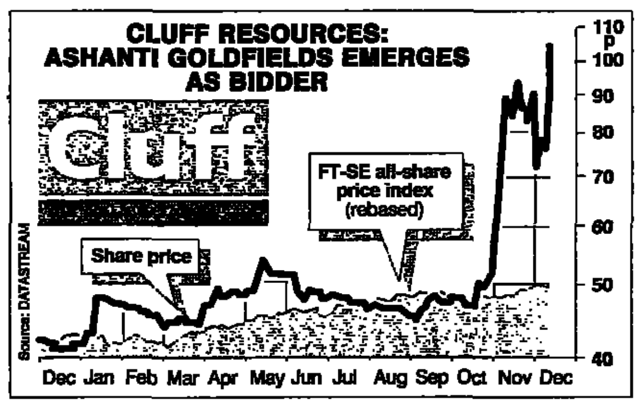
☐ *GILT-EDGED:* Bonds on both side of the Atlantic saw a correction, with gilts retreating after profit-taking and the implication on domestic interest rates of the CBI's survey and anti-rate cut noises from Eddie George.

The March long gilt future fell 18 ticks to £110¹⁶⁄₃₂, on volume of 57,000 contracts. Among conventional stocks, shorter-dated issues slipped by £¼, while losses extended to £¾ among longer-dated stocks. Index-linked fell £½.

☐ **NEW YORK:** On Wall Street, investors took profits and by midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 31.07 points lower at 5,168.06.

The soon-to-be floated National Grid, the power transmission group being demerged from the regional electricity companies, dipped ¾p to 208¾p, on volume of 6.73 million in the grey market. The shares were depressed by talk that Swiss Bank was a seller before Monday's first official dealings.

CLUFF RESOURCES: ASHANTI GOLDFIELDS EMERGES AS BIDDER



MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	5168.06 (-31.07)
S&P Composite	617.07 (-3.11)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	19412.32 (+344.46)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	9863.98 (-34.91)
Amsterdam:	
EOE Index	477.03 (-4.95)
Sydney:	
AO	2198.2 (-0.4)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	2263.11 (-4.07)
Singapore:	
Straits	2159.75 (+5.35)
Brussels:	
General	8128.94 (+42.41)
Paris:	
CAC-40	1846.80 (+12.05)
Zurich:	
SKA Gen	695.30 (-7.40)
London:	
FT 30	2635.0 (-13.4)
FT 100	3639.5 (-23.3)
FT-SE Mid 250	3953.9 (-6.0)
FT-SE-A 350	1804.7 (-9.6)
FT-SE Eurotrack 100	1462.47 (-2.02)
FT A All-Share	1778.74 (-9.50)
FT Non Financials	1870.36 (-10.59)
FT Fixed Interest	114.81 (-0.32)
FT Govt Secs	96.03 (-0.19)
Bargains	27255
SEAQ Volume	751.4m
USM (Datastrm)	191.37 (+0.16)
US$	1.5378 (-0.0029)
German Mark	2.2161 (-0.0056)
Exchange Index	82.8 (-0.1)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
£:ECU	1.1797
£:SDR	1.0559
RPI	149.8 Oct (3.2%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX	148.7 Oct (2.9%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

Abtrust Hi Inc (100)	98	...
Arlon Props	9	...
BZW Equit (306)	297	- 3
Benfield & Rea	103	...
CMG (290)	341	- 5
Cash Converters Intl	27	- 1
Celebrated Group	19	...
Cornworth (150)	152	...
Cox Insurance	110	...
East Surrey NV	448	...
Finsbury Tech (100)	100	...
Flomerics	205	...
Gardner (L)	141	...
Jasmin	95	...
London Town	80	...
Martin Currie Jp	96	+ 2
Martin Currie Jp Wts	32	+ 1
Megalomedia	114	+ 20
Peptide Thera (200)	237	- 3
Pet City	355	...
Revelation	100	...
Trocadero	44	- 1
Vero Group	271	+ 8
Wilmington	61	...

RIGHTS ISSUES

Allied Leisure n/p (34)	7	...
Cordiant n/p (60)	24	+ 1
Pilkington n/p (155)	35½	- 3½
Roxspur n/p (3)	¼	...
TBI n/p (50)	3¼	+ ¼

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:	
Delyn Group	103p (+20p)
Cluff Resources	104p (+12p)
Govett	242p (+22p)
Acorn Comp	215p (+13p)
Airtours	338p (+17p)
Acal	570p (+26p)
FALLS:	
Eve Group	165p (-35p)
Unipalm	675p (-105p)
Wensum	137p (-10p)
Reed Int	999p (-46p)
Celltech	555p (-24p)
Standard Chart	566p (-22p)
EMAP	552p (-19p)
Rainford	404p (-13p)
J Sainsbury	371p (-10p)
WH Smith	414p (-11p)

Closing Prices Page 33

TEMPUS

Change in the Lords

GOOD business acumen runs thick in the Wolfson family blood, so there was little complaint yesterday when the noble lord of Marylebone and king of catalogues stepped down to make way for the younger lord of Sunningdale and chairman of Next.

Change is not a word normally associated with Great Universal Stores, and yesterday it caused a frisson of excitement, pushing the company's share price up 41p to 655p at one point. The City is thick with talk of demergers, buy-backs and even the takeover of street-smart Next by the worthy GUS.

But while there is reason to believe that Great Universal will change its style, there is less hope that there will be much change in substance. The big gripe against GUS has been its reluctance to use its £1 billion cash pile. A buy-back or another special dividend payout seem feasible, but Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale has hardly shown himself more willing to pursue this course at Next, with its own substantial cash pile, than the departing chairman. There is also little sense in merging the two companies, leaving Great Universal with even more cash, although there may be room for increased co-operation on the mail-order side. A demerger seems unlikely when the net asset value of the company's divisions is barely more than the share price.

Great Universal's share price may improve simply because the new chairman is perceived as more investor-friendly and will do a better job in explaining the company's complex interests. But style aside, expect Great Universal to continue on its predictable course of year-on-year growth. After all, the new chairman is still Lord Wolfson.

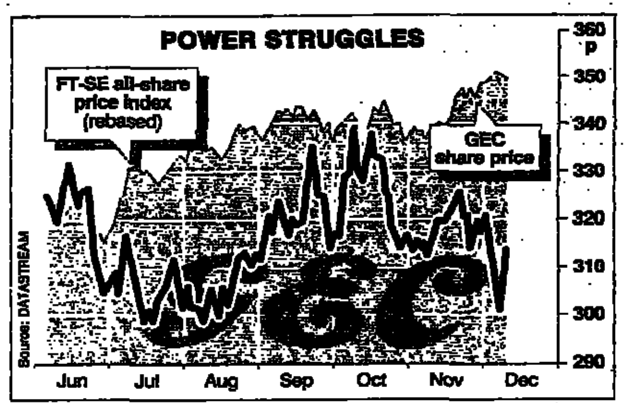
GEC

ANOTHER dullish performance from GEC hides the potential for a fascinating corporate restructuring. The company was silent yesterday on the thorny issue of the management succession, but sooner or later institutions will demand an answer. The appointment of an outsider introduces the possibility of the addition of a new growth business to GEC.

GEC is not performing badly, generating good margins from mature businesses. It is also looking cheap. Strip out the interest income and the cash from its market worth, and GEC shares are trading at less than 12 times current-year earnings. More importantly, GEC's £2.5 billion cash hoard makes a very useful dowry to a new chief executive which could be increased further. An outsider will not be wedded to the inheritance and may contemplate the sale of the assorted consumer and industrial businesses, raising a couple of billion more. Borrowings could provide GEC's new boss with £7 billion to invest in telecoms or financial services.

A logjam in the GEC boardroom is potentially more interesting as it could attract a bid. General Electric of America is growing rapidly in Europe and could conceivably front a break-up of GEC, taking power systems for itself and selling Marconi to British Aerospace. Siemens would doubtless be interested in GPT. Whatever the outcome, GEC is a share to hold.

POWER STRUGGLES



Blue Circle

RATHER than pull out of home products, a business that has caused Blue Circle some degree of anguish, the cement group has decided to spend more money on it. A full-scale restructuring of heating products in the UK, France and Germany is in train and it will cost Blue Circle about £55 million, mainly in cash.

The company is being coy about specifics; there will be lay-offs in the high-cost German operations and, unlike the UK, where redundant employees are owed nothing but their notice, workers on the Continent must be consulted. In future, a large part of the boiler production destined for the German market will be made in Britain, while the future of radiator production in France is in question.

Restructuring is expected to reduce costs by £25 million in a year, an important saving given that profits fell to just £100,000 in the first half from £12 million in the six months of the previous year. Blue Circle is not the first British company to notice that it is expensive to make things in Germany, but it has been slow to act, its attention drawn to improving the efficiency in its core cement business. Volumes are still depressed in heating, with the UK suffering from low housing transactions, but improved operating margins will protect Blue Circle from further price pressure and leave the business nicely geared for an upturn.

Compass

FRANCIS MACKAY, chief executive of Compass, the catering and healthcare company, prides himself on possessing a clear sense of direction. Having set out to build a global catering business, yesterday's results show that he is now within reach of his goal.

Results in America were particularly impressive, where profits grew by more than 20 per cent on a like-for-like basis. The performance should reassure doubters: when Compass paid £300 million last year for Canteen, the US catering company, some in the City became worried about a company getting too big for its boots. There was a feeling that Compass had stretched itself too far; after all it was only seven years since it emerged in a £150 million buyout and today it is knocking on the door of the FT-SE 100, valued at £1.4 billion.

Few doubt that Eurest, the latest buy, will also prove to be a success, and with plenty of room to improve margins, Compass looks set to continue on course. The high expectations have already been factored into the shares which sell at a premium of about 25 per cent. Existing shareholders should hang on, but the company is a little too pricey for new buyers.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE

COCOA

Dec	900-890	Mar	1014-1013
Mar	937-936	May	1024-1023
May	957-956	Jul	unq
Jul	977-975	Sep	--
Sep	995-994		
Dec	1005-1004	Volume: 2712	

ROBUSTA COFFEE ($)

Jan	2055-2050	Sep	1731-1730
Mar	1885-1881	Nov	1705-1700
May	1801-1800	Jan	1690-1660
Jul	1760-1755	Volume: 5242	

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)

Reuters		Oct	303.7-03.2
Spot: 385.5		Dec	297.7-97.0
Mar	352.5-52.0	Mar	296.1-94.5
May	342.0-41.3	May	296.4-94.0
Aug	331.7-31.2	Volume: 1258	

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

Average fatstock prices at representative markets on December 6

(p/kg lw)	Pig	Sheep	Cattle
GB:	107.37	118.35	121.51
(+/-)	+2.68	+3.15	-0.73
Eng/Wales:	107.37	119.78	120.50
(+/-)	+2.68	+4.97	-0.20
(%)	+9.0	+23.0	-6.0
Scotland:	unq	113.94	126.00
(+/-)	--	-2.39	-4.52
(%)	--	+14.0	+14.0

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	17.60	n/c
Brent 15 day (Jan)	17.60	n/c
Brent 15 day (Feb)	17.25	+0.05
W Texas Intermediate (Jan)	18.75	n/c
W Texas Intermediate (Feb)	18.40	n/c

PRODUCTS ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

Premium Gas .15	B: 169 (-1)	O: 171 (-1)
Gasoil EEC	169 (-1)	171 (n/c)
Non EEC IH Jan	170 (+2)	171 (+2)
Non EEC IH Feb	165 (+1)	166 (+1)
3.5 Fuel Oil	98 (n/c)	101 (+1)
Naphtha	154 (-1)	157 (n/c)

IPE FUTURES (GNI Ltd)

GAS OIL

Dec	165.00-65.25	Mar	158.50-58.75
Jan	165.25-65.50	Apr	155.75-56.00
Feb	161.75-62.00	Vol: 28817	

BRENT (6.00pm)

Jan	17.59-17.60	Apr	16.77-16.80
Feb	17.22-17.25	May	16.60-16.65
Mar	16.99 SLR	Vol: 37870	

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

WHEAT (close £/t)		BARLEY (close £/t)	
Jan	126.75	Jan	115.66
Mar	128.60	Mar	117.50
May	130.50	May	119.45
Jul	132.40	Sep	110.50
Sep	115.00	Nov	112.50
Volume: 925		Volume: 110	

POTATO (£/t)	Open	Close
Mar	unq	270.0
Apr	265.0	259.0
May	unq	300.0
		Volume: 106

RUBBER (No 1 RSS Cif p/k)

Jan 113.75-114.25

BIFFEX (GNI Ltd $10/pt)

	High	Low	Close
Dec 95	1635	1600	1625
Jan 96	1585	1541	1578
Feb 96	1565	1540	1565
Apr 96	1565	1535	1550
Vol: 247 lots		Open interest: 3938	

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LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

(Official) (Volume prev day)	Cash	3mth	Rudolf Wolff Vol
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	2955.0-2960.0	2673.0-2675.0	2154500
Lead ($/tonne)	739.00-740.00	724.00-725.00	176225
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1009.0-1010.0	1033.0-1034.0	466450
Tin ($/tonne)	6285.0-6295.0	6305.0-6315.0	24235
Aluminium Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1635.0-1635.5	1672.5-1673.0	1441575
Nickel ($/tonne)	8065.0-8075.0	8190.0-8195.0	54720

LIFFE OPTIONS

	Series	Calls Jan	Apr	Jul	Puts Jan	Apr	Jul
Alld Dom.	460	36½	49½	55	2½	7½	13
(*491½)	500	10½	24½	31½	16	23	31
Argyll	300	13½	24	28½	5½	11½	17½
(*310½)	330	3	10½	14½	25½	29	34½
ASDA	100	7½	11	15	3½	6½	7½
(*103½)	110	3	7	10½	9	11½	13
Boots	550	33½	49	56½	4½	10	17½
(*576)	600	7	21	29	28	33½	41½
Br Airways	460	19	33	41	7½	14½	22
(*468)	500	3½	14½	21½	32½	37	43½
BP	500	33½	42½	49	3	9	13½
(*527)	550	6	15½	22½	26	32½	37
Br Steel	160	10½	16	19½	2½	5	9½
(*167½)	180	1½	6½	9½	14	16	20½
C & W	420	33½	48	54	6½	12	18
(*443½)	460	12	26½	34	24	30	36½
CU	600	46½	59½	66½	5	18	22½
(*637½)	650	14½	30	39½	23½	43½	47½
ICI	750	21	35½	48	17½	36	41
(*750½)	800	4½	15½	27½	51	69	73
Kingfshr.	500	21	36½	41	10	23	30½
(*507½)	550	3½	14½	19½	43½	54	60
Land Sec.	600	16½	31½	38½	9	15½	26½
(*604)	650	1	10½	16	46	47	58
M & S	420	22½	34	40	4	8	14
(*436)	460	4	13	19	25½	28½	34
Nat West	650	29½	41	55	11	30	38
(*664)	700	8	19	32½	39	60	67
Sainsbury	360	18½	28½	33½	4½	9½	14½
(*371)	390	4	13½	18	21	24½	30½
Shell	800	38½	52½	58½	4	15	19½
(*829)	850	9½	22½	30½	24	39½	44
Smkl Bch.	700	23½	41	56	15	27½	32½
(*704)	750	6	19	33	48	57	60½
Storehse	330	18½	27	35	6	10½	15½
(*343½)	360	4½	12½	20	22½	26½	30½
Trafalgar	25	5½	7½	9	1½	3½	4½
(*29½)	30	4	5½	7½	4	6½	8
Unilever.	1300	30	52	68½	19	37½	46
(*1304½)	1350	9	27½	44½	49½	66½	74
Zeneca	1300	54½	86	112½	24	54½	69
(*1320)	1350	30½	60½	86½	49½	80	94
	Series	**Feb**	**May**	**Aug**	**Feb**	**May**	**Aug**
Grnd Met.	420	32	41	50	10½	14½	20½
(*446)	460	11½	21½	30½	32	35	41
Ladbroke.	140	22½	25	30	5	9½	11
(*155)	160	12	15	21	14½	19	21½
Utd Bisc	240	23	27	30½	5½	10	13
(*254½)	260	11½	16½	20½	13½	20½	23

	Series	Calls Jan	Apr	Jul	Puts Jan	Apr	Jul
BAA	460	32½	44	51	2½	7	12½
(*486½)	500	8	19½	28	18½	23½	29
Thames W	550	24	41½	49	10½	18	32
(*559½)	600	6	20½	26½	42	46½	61
	Series	**Feb**	**May**	**Aug**	**Feb**	**May**	**Aug**
BAT Ind	550	29½	36½	44½	15½	28½	36½
(*556½)	600	9½	16½	25	47½	60½	67
BTR	300	26½	29½	33	3	7½	9½
(*320½)	330	9	12	17	14½	22½	24½
Br Aero	800	40	57	75½	29½	43	51
(*800½)	850	19	36½	53	59½	71½	79
Br Telcm	330	21	26½	32½	7	9½	16½
(*346)	360	6½	12½	18	25	26½	33
Cadbury	500	54½	59½	69	7	16½	20½
(*540½)	550	22½	31	41½	25½	39	43
Guinness	420	41	46½	51½	4½	10	13
(*452)	460	14½	21½	29	17½	27½	31
GEC	300	19½	27½	31½	5½	7½	13
(*314)	330	5½	12	16	21½	23	28½
Hanson	180	9½	12	15	5½	7½	10
(*187)	191	4½	—	—	12	—	—
LASMO	160	14½	18	22½	4	7	9
(*168)	180	5	9	13½	14½	17	19½
Lucas	160	23	26½	29	1	3½	5
(*179)	180	9½	14	17½	7½	11	13
Pilkingtn	191	10½	16	19½	8	9½	13½
(*191)	210	4	8	12	20½	21	25
Prudential	420	35	40	48	10	18	22½
(*439½)	460	14½	21	28½	29½	39	43½
Redland	360	20	28½	32½	11½	20½	23
(*364)	390	7½	15½	19½	30	39	41
R-Royce	160	17	19½	23	3	6½	8
(*172)	180	6	9	13½	12	16½	18
Tesco	280	20½	26½	29	6½	10½	13
(*289½)	300	10	15½	18½	15	20½	23
Vodafone	200	34	30½	34	3	6½	8½
(*217)	220	12	18½	23	10½	14½	16½
Williams	300	28½	33½	35½	2	6½	8½
(*321½)	330	9½	15	18	13	20	22

FT-SE INDEX (*3641)

	3500	3550	3600	3650	3700	3750
Calls						
Dec	149	100	55	21½	5½	1
Jan	167	128	92	61	37½	20½
Feb	189	149½	113½	83	60	40½
Mar	208	170	138	106½	82	59
Jun	246	—	180½	—	129	—
Puts						
Dec	2	3½	9½	27	65	114½
Jan	17½	27½	42	61	89	124½
Feb	26½	37½	52	71½	99½	133½
Mar	41½	54	72½	92	118½	148
Jun	84	—	115½	—	163	—

	Series	Calls Dec	Mar	Jun	Puts Dec	Mar	Jun
Abby Nat.	600	37	56	62	1	18	25½
(*634)	650	6	27	35½	20	43½	50½
Amstrad	240	14	23½	30	1	7½	11
(*252½)	260	2	12½	19½	9½	17	20
Barclays	750	30½	54½	63	4	23½	33
(*775½)	800	4	27	38	27½	50	59½
Blue Circ.	300	30½	39½	43	0	5	10½
(*329½)	330	6	20	24½	6½	15½	23
Br Gas	220	11½	20½	24	2	7	11
(*229½)	240	1½	10½	14	12	16½	22
Dixons	390	24½	38½	48½	1	11½	19½
(*412)	420	6	22½	32	12	34	29
Forte	330	12	22½	26	3	11	19½
(*338)	360	1	8	9½	22½	26½	32
Tarmac	90	5½	10½	12½	1	4½	7½
(*94)	100	1	5½	7½	6½	10	13
Hillsdwn	140	14	18	19	0	2½	6
(*153½)	160	1½	6	7½	6½	10½	16½
Lonrho	160	17½	20½	26	0	3	4½
(*177)	180	3	9	15	5½	12	13
Sears	90	8	11	12½	0	1½	3
(*97½)	100	1	5	6½	3½	5½	8
Thrn Eml	1500	100	131½	170	1	21	30½
(*1595½)	1600	19½	71½	109½	23	59½	69
Tomkins	260	6½	14½	21½	3	11	14
(*262½)	280	0½	6½	12½	17½	23	25½
TSB	390	24½	31	34½	1½	17	18½
(*413)	420	4½	10½	16	12	33	35
	Series	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**
Glaxo Well	850	54	72	85½	7½	23½	32½
(*891½)	900	22	42½	57½	25	46½	55
HSBC	950	58½	84½	98	12	37½	46½
(*991)	1000	29½	56½	70½	31	61½	70
Reuter	600	27½	44	59	12½	26	32
(*611½)	650	7½	21½	35½	42½	53	59
	Series	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**
Royal Ins.	360	28½	38	44½	4½	17	22½
(*380)	390	12	23	30	17½	33	38½
	Series	**Dec**	**Mar**	**Jun**	**Dec**	**Mar**	**Jun**
Fisons	260	4½	9½	5½	0½	0½	0½
(*264)	280	0	0	0	16	16	18
	Series	**Feb**	**May**		**Feb**	**May**	
Eastern Gp	950	26½	27	—	2	1	—
(*974)	1000	0½	2	—	34	34	—
	Series	**Dec**	**Mar**	**Jun**	**Dec**	**Mar**	**Jun**
Natl Pwr	460	8½	25	36½	6½	15	26
(*460½)	500	0	10½	19½	39½	41	50½
Scot Pwr	360	12	20	28½	2½	12½	14½
(*368½)	390	1	7½	14½	21½	30	31½

December 7, 1995 Tot: 31589 Call: 19742 Put: 11847 FT-SE Call: 5047 Put: 3341

*Underlying security price.

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
FT-SE 100	Dec 95	3669.0	3670.0	3637.0	3645.5	15142
Previous open interest: 79103	Mar 96	3688.0	3692.0	3662.0	3670.0	6664
FT-SE 250	Dec 95	3954.0	3959.0	3940.0	3950.0	1461
Previous open interest: 3517	Mar 96	4000.0	4000.0	4000.0	4000.0	1436
Three Month Sterling	Dec 95	93.55	93.56	93.53	93.54	12608
Previous open interest: 396568	Mar 96	93.86	93.87	93.81	93.84	18005
	Jun 96	93.97	93.99	93.92	93.95	9574
Three Mth Eurodollar	Dec 95				94.26	0
Previous open interest: 110	Mar 96				94.69	0
Three Mth Euro DM	Dec 95	96.06	96.07	96.05	96.07	12750
Previous open interest: 956333	Mar 96	96.33	96.34	96.31	96.33	21819
Long Gilt	Dec 95	111-11	111-11	110-28	111-01	5394
Previous open interest: 148233	Mar 96	110-30	110-30	110-09	110-16	56719
Japanese Govmt Bond	Mar 96	122.10	122.15	121.95	121.95	1958
	Jun 96				120.65	0
German Gov Bd Bund	Mar 96	98.93	99.05	98.51	98.71	141664
Previous open interest: 177903	Jun 96	98.40	98.40	98.10	98.12	85
Three month ECU	Dec 95	94.58	94.60	94.53	94.59	1153
Previous open interest: 21159	Mar 96	94.82	94.84	94.75	94.83	704
Euro Swiss Franc	Dec 95	97.85	97.85	97.80	97.82	1755
Previous open interest: 55360	Mar 96	98.07	98.13	98.01	98.04	4130
Italian Govmt Bond	Mar 96	106.10	106.15	105.39	105.74	37506
Previous open interest: 44966	Jun 96				105.12	0

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 6¾ Finance Hse 7

Discount Market Loans: O/night high: 6¾ Low 6 Week fixed: 6⅝

Treasury Bills (Dis): Buy: 2 mth 6⁷⁄₁₆ ; 3 mth 6⁷⁄₁₆ . Sell: 2 mth 6⅜ ; 3 mth 6⅜ .

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis):	6⅝-6½	6⅝-6½	6½-6⅜	6⅜-6¼	
Sterling Money Rates:	6⅝-6½	6½-6⅜	6½-6⅜	6⅜-6¼	6⅜-6¼
Interbank:	6⅝-6½	6½-6⅜	6½-6⅜	6⅜-6¼	6⅜-6¼
Overnight: open 6¾, close 6.					
Local Authority Deps:	6½	n/a	6½	6⅜	6⅜
Sterling CDs:	6⅝-6½	6½-6⅜	6⅜-6¼	6⅜-6¼	6¼-6⅛
Dollar CDs:	5.83	n/a	5.67	5.51	5.38
Building Society CDs:	6⅝-6½	6½-6⅜	6½-6⅜	6⅜-6¼	6⅜-6¼

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	Call
Dollar:	5⅞-5¾	5¾-5⅝	5⅝-5½	5½-5⅜	5½-4½
Deutschemark:	4⅛-3⅞	4⅛-4	3⅞-3¾	3½-3⅜	4½-3½
French Franc:	5½-5¼	5¾-5½	5⅝-5½	5⅝-5½	5½-4½
Swiss Franc:	2¼-2	2¼-2⅛	2¼-2⅛	2⅛-2	2¼-1¼
Yen:	½-¼	⅝-½	½-⅜	½-⅜	n/a

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Bullion: Open $388.50-388.80 Close: $388.50-389.00 High: $388.50-389.00 Low: $387.20-387.70 AM: $388.40 PM: $387.80

Krugerrand: $388.50-390.50 (£252.75-254.75)

Platinum: $412.00 (£267.95) **Silver:** $5.24 (£3.405) **Palladium:** $131.85 (£85.75)

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mkt Rates for Dec 7	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Amsterdam	2.4763-2.4881	2.4833-2.4866	¾-½pr	1¾-1½pr
Brussels	45.43-45.70	45.56-45.66	12-9pr	31-26pr
Copenhagen	8.5530-8.6060	8.5780-8.6000	1¼-¾pr	3¼-2¾pr
Dublin	0.9656-0.9698	0.9672-0.9698	9-7pr	23-19pr
Frankfurt	2.2103-2.2207	2.2170-2.2201	¾-½pr	1⅞-1⅝pr
Lisbon	231.99-233.49	232.64-233.28	35-60ds	127-169ds
Madrid	188.47-189.29	188.82-189.12	43-52ds	139-155ds
Milan	2441.1-2451.4	2442.2-2446.3	7-9ds	23-25ds
Montreal	2.0963-2.1029	2.0991-2.1021	0.14-0.06pr	0.25-0.14pr
New York	1.5358-1.5390	1.5358-1.5368	0.10-0.08pr	0.26-0.23pr
Oslo	9.7150-9.7710	9.7470-9.7620	1¼-¾pr	3¼-2¾pr
Paris	7.6230-7.6600	7.6320-7.6460	½-¼pr	1¼-¾pr
Stockholm	10.119-10.222	10.199-10.222	¼-¾ds	¼-¾ds
Tokyo	155.44-155.91	155.62-155.88	¾-½pr	2¼-2pr
Vienna	15.545-15.638	15.545-15.527	¾-½pr	1¾-½pr
Zurich	1.7894-1.7986	1.7947-1.7975	¾-½pr	2-1½pr

Source: *Extel* *Premium - pr. Discount - ds.*

DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.3502-1.3511
Austria	10.12-10.13
Belgium (Com)	29.59-29.63
Canada	1.3659-1.3664
Denmark	5.5735-5.5765
France	4.9675-4.9685
Germany	1.4391-1.4398
Hong Kong	7.7340-7.7350
Ireland	1.5865-1.5885
Italy	1590.25-1590.75
Japan	101.23-101.28
Malaysia	2.5368-2.5378
Netherlands	1.6128-1.6133
Norway	6.3350-6.3400
Portugal	151.23-151.33
Singapore	1.4136-1.4136
Spain	122.87-122.97
Sweden	6.6277-6.6352
Switzerland	1.1661-1.1666

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso*	1.5360-1.5386
Australia dollar	2.0754-2.0781
Bahrain dinar	0.5745-0.5865
Brazil real*	1.4916-1.4957
China yuan	12.00 Buy
Cyprus pound	0.698-0.708
Finland markka	6.565-6.681
Greece drachma	362.25-369.25
Hong Kong dollar	11.8872-11.8964
India rupee	53.10-54.06
Indonesia rupiah	3488.0-3556.6
Kuwait dinar KD	0.4565-0.4665
Malaysia ringgit	3.8991-3.9019
New Zealand dollar	2.3737-2.3764
Pakistan rupee	52.53 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.5425-5.6665
Singapore dollar	2.1709-2.1738
S Africa rand (com)	5.599-5.701
U A E dirham	5.5925-5.7165

Barclays Bank GTS • Lloyds Bank

FT-SE VOLUMES

3i	369	Legal & Gn	306
ASDA Gp	4,400	Lloyds Bk	1,200
Abbey Ntl	3,800	London Elect	645
Allied Dom	1,200	Marks Spr	1,500
Argyll Gp	1,600	Mid Elec	246
Arjo Wggns	4,000	NatWst Bk	3,000
AB Foods	1,400	Nat Power	3,000
BAA	3,000	NW Water	201
BAT Inds	1,300	P & O	1,300
BOC	1,100	Pearson	394
BP	7,900	PowerGen	2,700
BSkyB	593	Prudential	1,700
BTR	7,700	REXAM	759
BT	17,000	RMC	205
Bk of Scot	293	RTZ	984
Barclays	3,200	Rank Org	2,300
Bass	5,000	Reckitt Col	1,400
Blue Circle	15,000	Redland	1,600
Boots	966	Reed Intl	4,700
BAe	2,200	Rentokil	548
BA	3,000	Reuters	3,000
Brit Gas	25,000	Rolls Royce	4,000
Brit Steel	1,900	Royal Ins	1,400
Burmah Cstl	160	Ryl Bk Scot	1,600
Cable Wire	3,100	Sainsbury	3,900
Cadbury	2,400	Schroders	148
Carlton Cms	1,700	Scot & New	481
Cm Union	418	Scot Power	687
Cookson	3,800	Sears	4,600
Courtaulds	565	Svrn Trent	390
De La Rue	689	Shell Trans	4,100
Enterpr Oil	1,600	Siebe	537
Forte	4,300	SmKl Bch	8,000
GKN	1,300	Smith Nph	872
GRE	1,900	Sthern Elec	681
GUS	8,100	Std Chartd	3,300
Gen Acc	1,100	Sun Allnce	936
Gen Elec	12,000	TI Gp	544
Glaxo Well	2,500	TSB	1,300
Granada	3,100	Tate & Lyle	592
Grand Met	5,800	Tesco	3,900
Guinness	1,100	Thames W	266
HSBC	2,300	Thrn EMI	857
Hanson	16,000	Tomkins	2,700
ICI	956	Unilever	1,400
Inchcape	4,300	Vodafone	10,000
Kingfisher	1,300	Whitbread	1,500
LASMO	455	Wllms Hld	366
Ladbroke	4,400	Wolseley	519
Land Secs	1,300	Zeneca	917

WALL STREET

	Dec 7 midday	Dec 6 close
AMP Inc	41	40⅞
AMR Corp	77⅝	78
AT & T	65⅝	65⅜
Abbott Labs	41⅜	41⅛
Advanced Micro	19⅝	20
Aetna Life	71⅜	72⅛
Ahmanson (HF)	26⅝	27⅛
Air Prod & Chem	56⅛	57⅜
AirTouch Comm	27⅜	27⅜
Alberto-Culver B	34⅜	34⅛
Albertson's	32⅝	33
Alcan Alumnm	33⅞	34⅛
Alco Standard	43	43
Allied Signal	48⅛	48⅞
Alum Co of Am	57⅞	58⅛
Amax Gold Inc	7⅛	7⅛
Amerada Hess	48⅝	48⅝
Amer Brands	42⅞	43⅜
Amer El Power	38	38⅜
Amer Express	44⅜	44⅜
Amer Genl Corp	33⅜	33⅜
Amer Home Pr	96⅜	95⅞
Amer Intl	92⅝	92
Amer Stores	27⅜	27⅜
Amer Standard	30⅛	30⅛
Ameritech	56⅜	57
Amoco	68⅝	68⅝
Anheuser-Busch	66⅜	65⅞
Apple Computer	37⅛	38⅞
Archer Daniels	17⅝	17⅞
Armco	5⅜	5⅛
Armstrng Wrld	62⅝	62⅝
Asarco	35⅛	35⅛
Ashland Oil	35	35⅜
Atl Richfield	112	112⅜
Auto Data Pro	82	81⅛
Avery Dennison	48⅝	48⅝
Avon Products	75⅞	75⅜
Baker Hughes	21⅜	21⅜
Baltim Gas & El	26⅝	27⅜
Banc One	39⅝	40
BankAmerica	66⅜	68⅛
Bank of NY	47	47⅛
Bankers Tr NY	67⅛	68⅛
Barnett Banks	61	61⅛
Bausch & Lomb	35⅞	34⅜
Baxter Intl	42⅝	42⅞
Bectn Dickinsn	73⅞	74
Bell Atlantic	64⅛	65⅜
Bell Industries	22⅜	22⅜
BellSouth	41⅛	41⅜
Black & Decker	36	36⅜
Block (H&R)	44⅜	44⅜
Boeing	74⅛	75⅜
Boise Cascade	35⅞	35⅜
Bristol Myrs Sq	84⅜	84⅜
Browning Ferris	31⅜	31⅜
Brunswick	21⅜	21⅜
Burlington Nthn	80⅜	80⅜
CNA Financial	115⅞	115⅛
CPC Intl	71⅜	71⅜
CSX	87⅜	87⅛
Campbell Soup	58⅞	59⅞
Can Pacific	18⅜	18⅛
Cpl Cities ABC	124⅜	125⅛
Carolina Pwr	33⅜	33⅜
Caterpillar	61⅜	62⅛
Central & SW	27⅜	27⅜
Champion Intl	44⅜	45⅜
Chase Manhat	62⅝	64
Chemical Bk	61⅜	62⅛
Chevron Corp	50⅞	50⅞
Chrysler	52⅜	52⅞
Chubb Corp	99⅜	99⅜
Cigna Corp	111⅜	112
Citicorp	70⅞	72⅜
Clorox	78⅜	77⅜
Coastal Corp	34⅛	34⅜
Coca Cola	78⅜	79⅜
Colgate-Palmolive	74⅛	74
Columbia Gas	43⅛	43⅜
ColumbiaHCA	53⅜	53⅞
Compaq Comp	46⅜	46⅞
Comp Ass Int	64⅛	63⅜
Conagra	40⅛	40⅛
Conrail	69⅛	69
Cons Edison	29⅜	29⅞
Cons Nat Gas	44⅜	44⅛
Cooper Inds	37⅛	37⅛
Corestates	39⅛	39⅛
Corning Inc	30⅜	31⅛
Crown Cork	42⅜	42⅜
Dana Corp	29⅛	29⅞
Dayton Hudson	72⅜	73
Deere	33⅜	33⅛
Delta Air Lines	78⅜	78⅛
Deluxe Corp	27⅜	27⅜
Detroit Edison	33⅛	34⅛
Digital Equip	62⅛	63⅛
Dillard Dept St	28⅛	29⅜
Disney (Walt)	61⅜	62⅜
Dominion Res	40⅛	40⅛
Donelley (RR)	39⅜	40
Dover Corp	37⅛	37⅛
Dow Chemical	72	72⅛
Dow Jones	39⅜	39⅜
Dresser	23⅛	23⅛
Duke Power	46⅛	46⅜
Dun & Brdstreet	62	62
Du Pont	68⅜	68⅝

	Dec 7 midday	Dec 6 close
Eastman Kodak	68⅜	68⅝
Eaton Corp	55	55⅝
Emerson Elec	80⅛	80⅝
Engelhard Corp	22⅝	22⅞
Enron Corp	37⅞	38⅛
Entergy	26⅞	26⅝
Ethyl Corp	13	12⅝
Exxon	80⅝	80⅞
FMC Corp	73	73⅞
FPL Group	44	44⅛
Federal Express	80	80⅞
Fed Nat Mtge	115	115⅜
First Interstate	140	139⅝
First Union Rlty	7⅛	6⅞
Fleet Finl Grp	42⅞	43
Fluor Corp	66⅛	65⅜
Ford Motor	28⅝	28⅞
GTE Corp	42⅞	42⅝
Gannett	63⅛	64⅛
Gap Inc Del	43⅛	44⅛
Gen Dynamics	61⅜	61⅜
Gen Electric	71	71⅜
Gen Mills	56⅛	57
Gen Motors	50⅝	50⅛
Gen Reinsurance	157⅜	157⅞
Gen Signal	33⅜	33⅞
Genuine Parts	40⅝	40⅛
Georgia Pac	73	73⅞
Gillette	53	53⅝
Glaxo Wellc ADR	27⅛	27⅛
Goodrich (BF)	67⅛	68⅛
Goodyear Tire	43⅛	43⅞
Grace (W&R)	62⅞	62⅝
Grt Atl Pac Tea	21⅜	22
Great Wstn Fin	25⅛	26⅜
Halliburton	45⅞	45⅛
Harcourt General	43	42⅝
Heinz (HJ)	33⅛	33⅝
Hercules	57⅛	58⅛
Hershey Foods	64⅛	65⅛
Hewlett Packard	79⅜	80⅜
Hilton Hotels	64⅜	65
Home Depot	44⅝	45⅝
Homestake Mng	16⅜	16⅞
Honeywell	47⅛	47⅛
Household Intl	64⅜	65⅞
Houston Inds	47⅜	47⅛
Humana	26⅜	26⅜
ITT Corp	125⅝	125⅝
Illinois Tool	61	61⅛
Illinova	29⅝	29⅞
INCO	33⅝	36⅛
Ingersoll Rand	38	37⅞
Inland Steel	25⅞	26
Intel Corp	60⅞	61⅛
IBM	94⅜	95⅝
Intl Flav & Fr	54⅛	53⅝
Intl Paper	37⅜	37⅜
James River Va	32⅛	32⅞
Jhnsn & Jhnsn	90⅝	90⅞
Kellogg	78⅞	79⅜
Kerr-McGee	59	59⅝
Kimberly-Clark	77⅜	74⅛
Kmart	7⅛	7⅛
Knight-Ridder	66⅛	66⅜
Lilly (Eli)	102⅝	103
Limited Inc	17⅛	17⅜
Lincoln Nat	49⅝	50
Litton	45⅜	45⅜
Liz Claiborne	28⅞	29⅜
Lockheed Martin	75⅛	75⅜
Louisiana Pac	25⅜	26⅜
MCI Comm	26⅛	26⅞
Marriott Int	39⅞	39⅜
Marsh & McLnn	89⅞	89
Masco Corp	29⅛	29⅞
May Dept St	44⅛	44⅜
Maytag Corp	21	20⅞
McDonalds	45⅜	45⅜
McDonnell D	88⅜	89⅞
McGraw Hill	84⅜	84⅛
Mead Corp	55⅛	56⅜
Medtronic	54⅞	53⅞
Mellon Bk	54⅜	56⅜
Melville Corp	31⅜	31⅜
Merck Inc	64⅜	63⅜
Merrill Lynch	55⅜	56
Microsoft	89⅜	90⅜
Minnesota Mine	66⅝	66⅛
Mobil Corp	109⅞	109⅜
Monsanto	117⅜	118
Morgan (JP)	80⅜	81⅜
Motorola Inc	60⅝	60⅛
Natl Semi	21⅜	21⅜
Natl Service Ind	32⅜	32⅜
Navistar Int	12⅜	11⅜
NY Times A	29⅜	29⅜
Newmont Mng	42⅞	42⅜
Niag Mohawk	10⅛	10⅜
Nike B	61⅜	61⅜
NL Industries	12⅜	12⅜
Noram Energy	8⅛	8⅛
Nordstrom	40⅛	39⅛
Norfolk Sthrn	79⅜	79⅜
Nthn State Pwr	48	48⅛
Norwest Corp	34⅜	34⅜
Nynex Corp	48⅛	48⅛
Occidental Pet	21⅜	22⅜
Ohio Edison	22⅛	22⅛
Oracle	44⅜	43⅜

	Dec 7 midday	Dec 6 close
Oryx Energy Co	13⅛	13⅛
Owens Corning	46⅛	46⅜
PPG Industries	46⅜	47⅜
PNC Bank	30	30⅜
PP&L Res	24⅜	25
Paccar Inc	47⅜	47⅜
Pacificorp	19⅜	20⅛
Pac Enterprises	27⅜	28⅛
Pac Gas & Elect	27⅛	27⅜
Pac Telesis	31⅜	31⅜
Pall Corp	27⅜	27⅜
Panhandle East	28⅜	28⅜
Parker Hannifin	36⅜	36⅛
Peco Energy	29⅜	29⅜
Penney (JC)	48⅜	48
Pennzoil	39⅜	39⅛
Pepsico	57⅜	57⅜
Pfizer	63⅛	64⅜
Pharm & Upjhn	36⅜	37⅜
Phelps Dodge	67⅜	67⅜
Philip Morris	90⅜	90⅛
Phillips Pet	33⅜	33⅜
Pitney Bowes	46⅜	47
Polaroid	46⅜	47
PriceCostco	16⅜	17⅛
Procter & Gmbl	87⅜	88
Providian	42⅜	42⅜
Pub Serv E & G	29⅜	30
Quaker Oats	35⅜	35⅜
Ralston Purina	66⅜	65⅜
Raychem Corp	56⅜	56⅜
Raytheon	45	45⅜
Reebok Intl	26	26
Reynolds Metals	56⅜	57⅜
Rockwell Intl	51	51⅜
Rohm & Haas	63⅜	64⅜
Royal Dutch	132⅜	131⅜
Rubbermaid	26⅜	26⅛
SBC Comms	55⅜	55⅜
Safeco Corp	36⅜	36⅞
St Paul's Cos	56⅜	56⅛
Salomon Inc	35⅜	35⅛
Sara Lee Corp	33⅜	33⅜
Scecorp	15⅜	16
Schering Plough	60	60⅜
Schlumberger	68⅜	67⅜
Scott Paper	60	57⅜
Seagram	35⅜	36⅜
Sears Roebuck	39⅜	39
Shell Trans	77⅜	77
Sherwin Wllms	39⅛	40⅜
Skyline Corp	18⅜	18⅛
Snap-On-Tools	43⅜	43⅛
Southern Co	23⅜	23⅛
Sprint Corp	40⅜	40⅛
Stanley Works	52⅜	51⅜
Sun Company	27⅜	27⅜
Sun Microsys	91⅜	89⅜
Suntrust	68⅜	69⅜
Supervalu	32⅜	32⅜
Sysco Corp	32⅜	32⅜
TRW Inc	77⅛	78⅜
TCC Inds	2⅜	2⅜
Tandem Comp	12	12⅛
Tandy Corp	45⅜	45⅛
Teledyne	24⅜	24⅛
Temple Inland	45	45⅜
Tenneco	48⅜	48⅛
Texaco	76⅜	75⅜
Texas Inst	53⅜	54⅛
Texas Utilities	38⅜	38⅜
Textron	76	76⅜
Time Warner	39⅜	39⅛
Times-Mirror A	33⅜	33⅜
Timken	39⅜	39⅛
Torchmark	43⅜	43⅛
Toys R Us	23⅜	23⅜
Transamerica	76⅛	77
Travelers	61⅜	62
Tribune	66⅜	66⅛
Tyco Labs	32⅜	33⅜
UST Inc	33⅜	33⅜
UAL	207⅜	207⅛
US Inds	17	17⅜
USX Marathon	18⅜	18⅜
Unicom	32⅜	32⅜
Unilever NV	138⅛	139⅛
Union Camp	48⅜	48⅜
Union Carbide	40⅛	40⅜
Union Pacific	67⅜	68
Unisys Corp	6⅜	6⅛
USAIR Group	12⅜	12⅛
USF&G Corp	17⅜	17⅜
US Life	31	30⅜
United Tech	96⅜	96⅜
Unocal Corp	27⅛	27⅜
VF Corp	52⅜	52⅜
WMX Tech	29⅜	30
Wal-Mart Stores	23⅜	24⅜
Warner-Lambert	93⅜	93
Wells Fargo	219	218⅛
Westinghouse El	16⅜	16⅜
Weyerhaeuser	43⅜	44
Whirlpool	56⅛	57⅜
Whitman	22	22⅜
Winn Dixie	35⅜	35⅜
Woolworth	14⅜	14⅛
Wrigley (Wm) Jr	46⅜	47⅛
Xerox	141⅜	141⅜
Yellow Corp	12⅜	12⅛

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

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Return of the wizard of Rom

MICHAEL MILKEN, the convicted junk bond wizard, is back — as a wizard. He is featured on a new CD-Rom series entitled *Mike's Math Adventures*, designed to teach children maths. First disc: *Decimals and Dragons*. Milken's voice is that of a magician who guides children through various maths problems. Although the wizard is putting up some of the development money himself, the series is produced by 7th Level Inc, the same people who brought you the popular game *Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time*. Milken is understood to have taken an interest in the project after doing some inner city teaching as part of his compulsory community service after his conviction and prison sentence for securities fraud.

Same old story

SURPRISING though it may seem, even the most sophisticated financial movers and shakers still fall for the Nigerian letters fraud. The Personal Investment Authority, the watchdog for firms selling direct to the public, is now set to issue a special warning to its members after it came to light that several had actually fallen for the old trick. The Nigerian letters always have the same theme: Dear Sir or Madam. I am a thief who has stolen a lot of money from the Government and I would like your help to get it out of Nigeria. On that basis you had better watch out from whom you buy your pension.

HAVE YOU HEARD THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT RETAIL SPENDING?

In touch

PETER RONEY, 47, recently appointed chief executive of the Save and Prosper Group, has a special reason for being pleased that his unit trust company is sponsoring the international rugby matches at Twickenham. As a youngster, he played at county level for Derbyshire. Formerly the group's sales, marketing, and product-development director, Roney is looking forward to seeing the next match at Twickenham between England and Western Samoa on December 16.

Extra dry

A SOBERING pre-Christmas thought for those celebrating with sherry. The wine producers in Jerez will in the new year lower the alcohol content of their dry sherry or *fino* because of changes in taste and tax changes in the drink's main export markets. The sweeter sherries such as *amontillado* and *oloroso* are not affected.

Serious lunchers

BOARDROOM heads are behind this week's opening of London's newest restaurant, The Avenue. It has no fewer than 74 shareholders including George Bull (Grand Metropolitan), Michael Spencer (chairman of InterCapital), Alan Eisner (Salomon) and Chris Bodker (ex-Warburgs). Described by founder Gary Boom (ex-InterCapital) as a cross between Le Caprice and Quaglinos, The Avenue claims the largest bar in any restaurant in London. With so many City backers, it's likely to have a buzz of financial information.

Worried accountants run for cover after court ruling

Jon Ashworth

on the implications of the rising legal threat now faced by partnerships

Few accountants will have slept easily in their beds on Wednesday night. Earlier in the day, up to 150 partners in the former BDO Binder Hamlyn heard the unpleasant news that they might soon be writing out a cheque for £225,000 each. This, in a profession where cheques customarily flow the other way, was not what they wanted to hear. Defeat in the courts might not necessarily heap ruin on their heads, but would certainly cause them to think twice about that trip to the Caribbean.

The sheer size of the damages award against BDO Binder Hamlyn — the bill could top £105 million once interest and costs are included — serves as a reminder to one and all of the huge rise in litigation pending against professional firms in the UK.

The collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), and subsequent talk of claims of up to $8 billion against Ernst & Young and Price Waterhouse, made accountants appear more vulnerable than they have ever been. It does not take a mathematician to work out what a successful claim on this scale would do to a firm.

A sum as large as $8 billion is hard to take seriously. Translate this into £225,000 in your bank account, however, and it suddenly becomes real money. Partners of Binder Hamlyn, past and present, suddenly find themselves in the shoes of so many aggrieved Lloyd's of London names, forced to reach deep into their pockets to fund something that was not even their fault. Such are the perils of joint and several liability.

Binder Hamlyn is to appeal against the High Court ruling that saw £65 million, plus costs and interest, awarded to ADT, the electronic security company, as a result of alleged negligence in work carried out several years ago. The firm believes its chances of success are high, and partners may yet win the reprieve they are hoping for. But the ADT award rams the point home: partners are in the firing line. And never has the case for incorporation — the ring-fencing of partners against just such a threat — appeared so overwhelming.

Developments in the insurance market have much to do with it. The so-called Big Six accountancy firms are now so large — and hence so exposed to potential claims — that obtaining sufficient professional indemnity insurance has become all-but impossible.

BDO Binder Hamlyn, ranked eighth in the UK until the main chunk merged with Arthur Andersen in September 1994, could only obtain insurance cover worth £71 million. The ADT judgment leaves a shortfall of about £34 million — the amount for which partners will be personally liable if the appeal fails.

The Big Six have to pay prohibitive rates for even a small amount of insurance cover. They cannot buy sufficient cover, and the partners are carrying huge deductibles, quite involuntarily. Capacity in the insurance market has reduced sharply and suits on the BCCI scale have concentrated the minds of underwriters.

The collapse of BCCI has made accountants appear more vulnerable

There has been no shortage of scares. In 1989, Arthur Young paid a total of £50 million in separate settlements to the Bank of England and Johnson Matthey over its audit of Johnson Matthey Bank. Two years later, KPMG agreed to pay £40 million to settle a lawsuit arising from the discovery of a massive fraud at International Signals following its purchase by Ferranti International, the defence contractor. Arthur Andersen was sued by Bankers Trust for £600 million over its role as adviser to the Magnet management buyout. The firm denied negligence. The case was settled out of court last year for a sum thought to be less than £50 million.

In America, the wall of suits against professional firms has reached titanic levels. Some $40 billion in writs is floating around, and the major firms, spending up to 10 per cent of revenues a year defending such suits, have been quick to embrace limited liability status. Since the autumn of 1994, they have been able to reregister as limited liability partnerships, mainly (but not exclusively) in the state of Delaware.

This, the so-called Delaware option, is an alternative that has been denied their UK counterparts so far. It protects partners' personal assets, but does not prevent the firm as a whole from being sued.

President Clinton will decide within the next ten days whether to approve new legislation which will afford sweeping protection for partners in US firms. Under proportionate liability, they will only become liable for the relevant percentage of their role on a particular assignment — say, 5 per cent — rather than having to take on 100 per cent as in the case of the Binder Hamlyn partners.

The legislation has been brought in to help smaller, higher risk companies, who have found it increasingly difficult to win the services of larger US firms. Faced with the potential for huge law suits, the Big Six in America have been reluctant to take on such clients.

In the UK, in the absence of such legislation, firms have instead spent the best part of two years studying ways of turning themselves into limited liability companies — incorporating themselves, in essence, to build an extra barrier against the legal tide. As in America, such a move does not prevent individual partners from being sued for negligence, but protects partners *en masse* from the Binder Hamlyn scenario.

All this is far easier said than done. KPMG discovered just how hard when it began lobbying its own partners about the benefits of incorporation. Incorporation brings with it a huge financial penalty — the National Insurance implications could wipe as much as 10 per cent of profits — and threatens to chip away at the partnership ethos.

KPMG was ultimately forced into a compromise — it would incorporate its audit practice and leave the rest of the firm unchanged. The plans now being implemented will give rise to a curious situation, where individuals will be known as audit directors one day and plain partners the next. KPMG's move was seen as a bold response to the ever-present threat of litigation. Colin Sharman, the firm's senior partner, left little to the imagination when he said: "It is clear from the size of some of the largest claims that if one were to succeed, it would wipe out a firm."

Competitors, notably Ernst & Young and Price Waterhouse, have been actively considering the best course to take. The betting has been on full incorporation, despite the financial penalties and undesirable impact on internal culture.

Now, the whole issue seems poised for a dramatic turn. Price Waterhouse has abruptly called a press conference for Monday, promising a solution to the incorporation debate that will be "innovative and a little unexpected". Ernst & Young has promised to disclose its plans by Christmas.

Everything points to the arrival of the so-called Delaware option for UK firms, providing a way of protecting individual partners with a simple flick of the switch. Fingers point to a nearby offshore centre, be it the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. The move, if it materialises, would really give partners something to talk about.

More misery over mis-sold pensions

Two years on, compensation is sparse in the SIB probe, says **Karen Zagor**

Justice has advanced at a snail's pace since the Securities & Investments Board (SIB), the chief city regulator, first announced its review into the mis-selling of personal pensions two years ago today.

The task of trying to assess how many of the estimated two million people who transferred, opted out or did not join occupational pensions between 1988 and 1993 did so as a result of bad advice has always been gargantuan. It is not surprising that the pensions industry, which is facing a potential costs and compensation bill of £4 billion, has not exactly leapt to the rescue.

But this does not explain why the compensation process, as outlined by SIB last October, is so far off-track. SIB ruled that life companies and financial advisers should give priority to sorting out the cases of about 400,000 investors.

The case reviews for the first tranche of investors, including those who had already retired or died, was supposed to be completed by the end of this month. It is safe to say that this deadline will be missed. Part of the blame can be laid at the feet of the independent financial advisers. Many have refused even to send out forms to customers as part of the initial process of reviewing past pensions business.

> ‘Part of the blame can be laid at the feet of the IFAs’

They claim that they would be forfeiting their professional indemnity insurance cover by essentially inviting customers to claim for compensation. About 1,500 IFAs have so far declined to take part in the review.

The Personal Investment Authority (PIA), which has set up a special pensions unit, has been advised that IFAs can conduct the reviews legally without jeopardising their insurance cover. It is now taking a closer look at members' efforts and says it will see that they are fined or surcharged starting early next year if they are found to be hindering the compensation process.

It is not fair to hold the IFAs entirely responsible for the delays. Part of the problem lies in the regulatory structure itself. SIB initiated the review in 1993 and set the guidelines for the compensations process in 1994, but the PIA has been largely responsible for the review process.

SIB has a legal mandate for its watchdog role, but the PIA, which is a self-regulating organisation, has no legal powers over its members, merely contractual.

When SIB published guidance on how the compensation review should be carried out, it was charged with foisting its methods on the PIA and taken to court by the Independent Financial Advisers Association and London Insurance Brokers Mutual, a firm which provides professional indemnity insurance.

The court ruled that SIB was allowed to set guidelines, but that it had no right to force the PIA to follow its plans. In the end, the PIA carried out its own consultation and introduced a review process that was similar to SIB's. But the court case, and the need to draft two sets of guidelines to achieve the same end, was time-consuming.

In addition, PIA guidance on how to calculate compensation was not issued until August, delaying the development of special software to help to calculate how much was owed.

Daniel Shaw, a solicitor at Nicholson Graham and Jones, a law firm specialising in pensions, says the delays have prompted some people to circumvent the review process by going to court, so far with little success.

In a case brought in September against the Prudential in Salford county court, the Prudential won a stay of proceeding on the grounds that the case would be reviewed in line with SIB guidelines.

Some life companies have now made provisions for compensation. Barclays Life has set aside £58 million to cover the cost of mis-sold pensions. Lloyds Abbey Life has made an £80 million provision.

For the moment, SIB hopes to issue a progress report early next year. Meanwhile those hapless individuals who believe they were inappropriately advised to leave generous occupational pension schemes by salesmen hungry for the large commissions on personal pensions must wait.

Sarah Bagnall on the saga surrounding the future of Littlewoods

Dynasty returns as a real-life ‘soap’

The *Littlewoods* saga has all the hallmarks of a popular soap opera. It features family feuding, private detectives, a probe into possible fraud, links with an international arms trader and allegations of racial discrimination.

These are just subplots, however. The main issue is the future ownership of Britain's biggest privately owned company. The £2 billion pools and stores empire is owned by 32 members of the Moores family spread over four generations. Littlewoods is one of the last remaining corporate dynasties.

The Vesteys lost control of Dewhursts, the butchers, the Barings lost control of the eponymous bank and Rocco Forte is fighting to retain control of Forte, the hotels group founded by his father.

Littlewoods was founded in 1923 by Sir John Moores, son of a bricklayer and a millgirl. He fathered Betty, now Lady Grantchester, John junior, Peter and Janatha. They in turn had 20 sons and daughters. Since the death of Sir John in 1993, at 97, the company has been beset by infighting, little of which has leaked beyond the company's Liverpool headquarters.

The family is said to be split into five factions, with some wanting to realise their wealth, others wanting more involvement in the running of the group, while others want to protect the group's private status.

Lady Grantchester is said to be in the latter group while younger members of the family are more inclined to reduce their holdings. The secretive Moores family has been thrown into the public arena as a result of an unsolicited takeover approach from Barry Dale, the company's former chief executive.

Lady Grantchester with a portrait of Sir John Moores who founded the Littlewoods dynasty

Mr Dale was fired from the post he had held for 18 months in March and is now suing the company for wrongful dismissal. His departure is still shrouded in mystery.

The emergence of a possible offer from Mr Dale has prompted several other takeover approaches to be made to the board. A £1.1 billion offer from N Brown and Iceland was made public last week.

Mr Dale's dismissal came less than six months after Prohip Duha, chief executive of Littlewoods' international division, was sacked for speaking without authority to a journalist. Mr Duha is also suing Littlewoods for unfair dismissal, alleging racial discrimination.

Last year, the company ran into a series of problems. It called in private detectives to investigate possible fraud in its buying department. The family also became alarmed about the behaviour of Lorad, a Virgin Islands company with which Littlewoods had a trading partnership.

The deal was struck because Littlewoods was trying to cut out the middle man by buying direct from the Far East using Lorad's contacts. The joint venture which was established in 1991 was swiftly terminated when Littlewoods discovered that Lorad had links to the international defence industry.

Littlewoods were said to have paid £7 million to extract itself from the partnership and Lorad is suing Littlewoods for £1 million.

The management departures come at a time when Littlewoods is facing some of the toughest trading conditions since it was founded. Last month, Leonard van Geest, chairman, warned the family that profits were expected to be "some way below" last year's. In 1994, the group made a pre-tax profit of £116 million on turnover of £2.7 billion.

The group faces fierce competition in all of its three main activities, high street shops, catalogue retailing and football pools.

In March, Littlewoods revealed a 10 per cent rise in the pools trading profits to £27.6 million on sales up 7.5 per cent at £861 million. However, these figures fail to show the impact of the National Lottery.

The group's operation is highly labour intensive compared to the high-tech National Lottery. Littlewoods has 70,000 self-employed agents collecting coupons from customers' homes and a high proportion of coupons are checked by hand.

The Littlewoods retail business is a poor performer on the high street. Profits in 1994 fell from £37.8 million to £24.5 million on sales down from £542 million to £501 million.

Littlewoods fortunes are underpinned by home shopping, which in 1994 lifted profits from £69.2 million to £73.4 million.

Concerned about the company's future, the family sought advice. Coopers & Lybrand and Michael Gatenby, a former director of Charterhouse Bank, were appointed to conduct separate reviews of the options open to shareholders.

The preliminary recommendation from Mr Gatenby was that shareholders should consider a partial float of the group in the a few years time.

Now the family has to decide whether to pursue Mr Dale's offer and any other bids that emerge, or whether to hold fire and complete the review of options.

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BARCLAYS

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Acorn challenges America's computer giants

FROM RICHARD THOMSON
IN NEW YORK

ACORN Computer Group, the British company, has won the race to produce the first low-cost, simple-to-use Internet computer, causing consternation among the giants of the US computer industry.

Acorn will start shipping a stripped down version of its A-7000 personal computer in the next few weeks at a cost of less than £590 each.

This will put the company well ahead of US manufacturers, such as Sun Microsystems and Silicon Graphics, which are still only talking about producing an effective low-cost computer package to broaden the PC market.

Acorn believes it can push the cost down even further by enabling the computer, called Netsurfer, to use the family television screen instead of a conventional monitor.

Acorn is already discussing licensing deals with several US and Asian companies to broaden the marketing of the new machine. Oracle, the US software development group, is understood to be considering the Netsurfer as the basis for an Internet computer. Personal computer companies have been in a race to produce a simple, fast, reliable and cheap machine for use by people who do not need the extra features that most personal computers currently offer. The stripped down computer is designed to appeal particularly to those who want to use the Internet, although it can carry out most routine personal computing tasks as well.

With the PC market still expanding by more than 25 per cent a year in the US and with public interest in the Internet growing fast, American computer executives believe the new machine could capture a significant segment of the market. The difficulty which US manufacturers have yet to overcome is developing sophisticated technology at a low enough cost.

By using microchip technology developed by Advanced RISC Machines, its sister company based in Cambridge, Acorn is able to produce microchips as powerful as those from Intel, the world's leading microchip manufacturer. At $20 each, however, they are substantially cheaper than Intel's, keeping down the cost of the finished computer.

Acorn has also developed special technology for displaying high quality text on television screens so that purchasers of its new computer will not have to buy a separate monitor.

Costs are further reduced because Netsurfer uses its own operating software, which means Acorn does not have to pay licensing fees to Microsoft.

US computer companies are hoping that Acorn will have trouble marketing its machines in the world's largest computer market. Its name is not well known to American consumers, even though its technology is used by US companies such as Apple Computer. Licensing agreements with leading US manufacturers could help Acorn.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Call for inquiry on gas pipeline delay

INTERCONNECTOR UK has lodged an appeal for a public inquiry to the Department of the Environment to hasten a decision on its planning application to build a natural gas pipeline from Britain to continental Europe. North Norfolk District Council has failed to come to a decision since the application was first made in March, but Interconnector, 40 per cent owned by British Gas, is continuing discussions with the council and hopes for its approval without recourse to a lengthy public inquiry.

Philip Nolan, Interconnector managing director, said: "We will continue talking with the district council, as we have done for the past nine months. We believe we are making progress, but we do need to set a time limit." If there is a public inquiry, it would delay the start of construction of the pipeline and could also push back the October 1998 target opening date. Mr Nolan said it would be several months before any appeal could be heard. Interconnector is planning to start construction work in Bacton in autumn 1998.

Progress at Hartstone

HARTSTONE, the troubled hosiery and leather goods group, said it had made progress in slimming operations to reduce costs but trading was still hampered by depressed demand. In the half-year to September 30, profits improved to £2.9 million from £2.7 million, despite lower turnover of £104.7 million (£111 million). Earnings eased to 0.8p a share (1.1p). But the interim dividend is restored at 0.16p a share (nil). The shares fell to 12¼p from 13¾p yesterday. Shaun Dowling, chairman, said: "Longer-term, rationalisation and brand building should achieve more positive results."

Lovell suffers losses

YJ LOVELL, the construction company, continues to be hit by a stagnant housing market. In the year to September 30 it incurred a pre-tax loss of £32.4 million compared with a profit of £4.2 million in the previous 12 months. Strategic changes and an asset review accounted for much of this loss, requiring writedowns and closures of £30.5 million. The loss per share was 84p, compared to last year's earnings of 9.4p. The company, which did not pay an interim dividend, is also passing payment of a final dividend. The total dividend in the previous year was 1p. The shares fell 4p to 17p yesterday.

Tour firms' shares rise

SHARES in Airtours, Britain's second-largest tour operator, jumped 21p to 342p and those in First Choice, its rival, rose 6p to 62p yesterday amid talk of possible bid interest in the companies from Carnival Cruise, of the US. Both operators refused to comment on "market rumour", but the City believes that the cash-rich cruise line, the world's largest, wants to diversify into the UK summer market. Airline agreements between the UK and the US would prevent it taking full control of Airtours or First Choice, which both have their own airline, but it might be able to buy a 50 per cent stake in either.

GWR ahead 71%

GWR GROUP is optimistic on prospects after buoyant advertising revenues and acquisitions helped pre-tax profita of the Bristol-based commercial radio operator to surge 71 per cent, to £5.31 million, in the year to September 30. The group, which now operates 28 licences after the £20.6 million acquisition of Chiltern Radio in July, saw total turnover advance 57 per cent, to £32 million. The final dividend rises 39 per cent, to 1.31p (0.94p), and is payable on March 5, lifting the total for the year 8 per cent to 2.25p (1.63p), from earnings per share up 35 per cent, to 6.5p (4.8p).

Hotel group's slow start

ST JAMES BEACH HOTELS, the Barbados hotels operator, said that after a slow start to the financial year bookings had recovered in the second quarter and continued to improve in the second half. In October occupancy rates at the three hotels open was 80 per cent. In the half-year to September 30, losses increased to £203,000 before tax from £51,000, affected by the slow start: the loss per share was 1.57p (0.58p). The interim dividend is lifted to 1.5p (1.25p). A review of costs is under way. The company's net assets rose to 144p a share (119p), reflecting a rise in capacity. The shares rose 1p to 137p.

American factory orders setback

BY OUR CITY STAFF

ORDERS received by American factories dipped slightly during October, the Commerce Department reported yesterday, primarily because of a big drop in demand for new commercial aircraft.

The 0.3 per cent decline in October orders to a seasonally adjusted $305.1 billion followed strong gains of 1.4 per cent in September and 2.7 per cent in August. But excluding transportation equipment, a category that covers airplanes as well as new cars, orders were up 1.4 per cent in October after being flat in September.

The October factory report showed orders for transportation equipment dropped 10.5 per cent to $38.6 billion after rising 10.6 per cent in September. The department said most of the fall was accounted for by fewer orders for new airplanes and parts, but other types of transportation goods also weakened.

Separately, America's Labour Department said new claims for state unemployment pay shot up by 14,000 last week, pointing to weakness in labour markets.

On Wednesday, the Commerce Department said its index of leading indicators dropped sharply, by 0.5 percent, in October, its sharpest fall since April and the seventh decline in the past nine months.

Taken together, the reports suggest the economy has lost momentum after growing at a robust 4.2 percent annual rate during the third quarter.

Wolfson to step down at Great Universal Stores

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

GREAT Universal Stores, the mail order company, revealed yesterday that Lord Wolfson of Marlylebone, its chairman, is to step down next summer after 44 years on the board.

Lord Wolfson, 68, will be replaced by his cousin Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, 60, who is a non-executive board member and chairman of Next, the clothing retailer.

Lord Wolfson is the son of the company's founder Sir Issac Wolfson and has been chairman of Great Universal since 1981. He has presided over an uninterrupted growth in profits, stretching back 47 years, during which time the company has never made a cash call on shareholders.

Lord Wolfson will continue offering his services to the company in the capacity of honorary president. But he will concentrate his energies on administering the Wolfson Foundation, the charitable trust established by his father to foster science and education programmes.

Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale is a former chief of staff in Mrs Thatcher's office. In 1990 he became chairman of Next, and is widely credited with helping rescue the clothing company from collapse.

The City reacted warmly to the news of the new appointment, anticipating a quick enhancement in shareholder value and shares closed up 20p at 634p.

Great Universal also unveiled a 5 per cent rise in half-year profits to £237.5 million, boosted by a good performance from its Burberry and Scotch House clothing retailing subsidiaries and from its financial and information services division.

The interim dividend increased by 11 per cent to 5p. Turnover rose by 4.5 per cent to £1.2 billion, while operating profits added 8.2 per cent to £193.2 million.

But the company continued to express caution about the competitive trading conditions its mail-order businesses faced. Burberry and Scotch House increased turnover by 21 per cent to £124 million and profits by 27 per cent to £96.4 million, while profits from the company's overseas retailing interests rose 24 per cent to £18.5 million.

Turnover in financial and information services was also up by 20 per cent to £108 million, while profits increased by 5 per cent to £66.5 million. Profits from the property rental division were up 6 per cent to £31.5 million as occupancy levels remained high at 98.5 per cent.

But profits from the home-shopping division fell 3 per cent to £94 million and turnover was flat, as the hot summer hit catalogue shopping and the cost of printing soared after a rise in the price of raw materials.

There was a small drop in interest receivable to £43.8 million reflecting the payment of a special dividend in March 1995. The half-year dividend is due on March 29 1996.

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New man: Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale is to take over

Blue Circle heating shake-up costs £55m

BY ERIC REGULY

BLUE CIRCLE Industries, the building materials and home products group, is to take a £55 million charge to cover the restructuring of its lacklustre heating division, which will include extensive jobs losses.

The overhaul will slash the heating unit's costs by £25 million a year by 1997 in an effort to restore its earnings growth.

Blue Circle Heating reported a mere £100,000 in profits in the first half of this year, against £12.8 million in the same period last year.

James Loudon, the finance director, said: "The market has been terrible for some time, but there's no question that underperformance is also to blame."

The restructuring will concentrate the manufacturing of gas boilers in Staffordshire and oil boilers in France. Manufacturing will be substantially reduced, but not eliminated, at the high-cost German site, which employs 1,500.

Blue Circle would not say how many of the boiler division's 7,100 employees would face redundancy.

An additional restructuring charge of £8 million will be taken against Blue Circle Bathrooms, which includes the Armitage Shanks and Qualitas Bathrooms businesses and employs 3,600. Part of the charge will be used to cover 150 redundancies.

The total restructuring charge of £63 million will be taken in the current financial year. Most of it will be offset by an exceptional gain of £55 million on the sale of the group's landfill business to South West Water in July.

Blue Circle said that overall profits before exceptional items and tax would remain in line with analysts' forecasts of about £270 million in the year to March 31.

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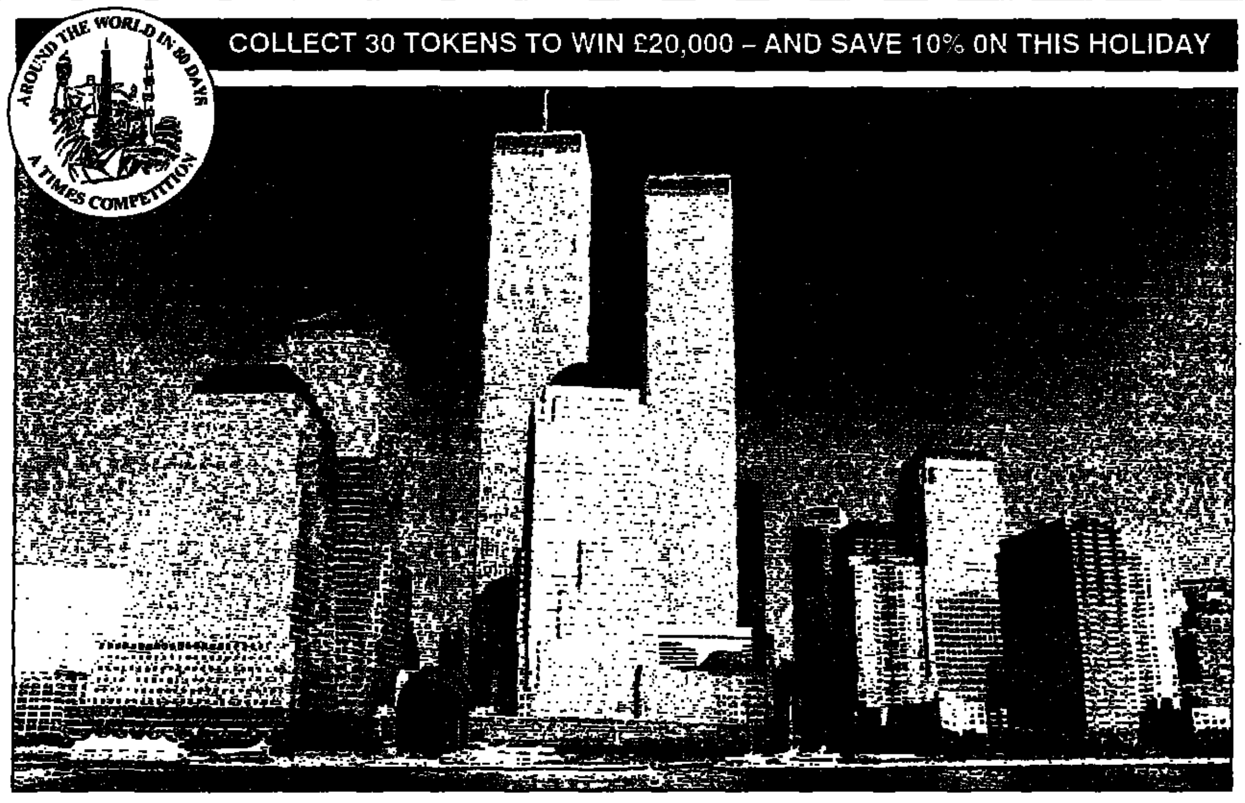

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Today's prize is a three-night break for two in New York worth £758. You will be staying at the three-star Lexington Hotel which has two award winning restaurants. It is on the Eastside, near Bloomingdales and Madison Avenue .so a good place to stay if you want to see what bargains you can pick up at New York's January sales.

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To win today's holiday answer the question below and phone our competition hotline: 0891 40 50 34 which will be open until midnight tonight. The winner will be chosen at random from all correct entries received. Normal Times Newspapers competition rules apply.

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Calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p at all other times.

TOMORROW: WIN A CRUISE TO LATIN AMERICA

AIB pays £101m for Govett Group

BY ROBERT MILLER

ALLIED IRISH BANKS (AIB) yesterday confirmed it is to buy the John Govett Group, the UK fund manager owned by Govett & Co, for £101 million in cash.

As part of the deal, Govett & Co, which has spent much of this year fighting allegations of fraud and racketeering filed by the American Endeavour Fund in the US courts, will change its name to London Pacific Group.

The latest stage in the long legal battle moved in October from America to the Royal Court of Jersey where American Endeavour has re-filed its claims. Govett, which has always strenuously denied the allegations, will re-file a counter claim for damages of $180 million. American Endeavour's action effectively scuppered Govett's proposed purchase of Duff & Phelps Corporation, a US investment manager with $41 billion of assets under management.

As a result, Govett changed tack and asked Schroders in the UK and Bear Stearns in the US to look for a suitable purchaser for its investment management business. Yesterday's announcement was the result of that search.

Under the deal, AIB will have a 75 per cent stake in John Govett, which looks after more than $4 billion, while the management team holds 20 per cent and the Govett Oriental Investment Trust will hold the remaining 5 per cent. Kevin Pakenham and Charles Fowler, chief executive and deputy chairman of John Govett, will become joint chairmen of John Govett & Co.

The $101 million purchase price represents 3.7 per cent of the funds under management. After the sale, Govett will have a corporate cash pile and cash equivalent of about $175 million after costs.

Last year the John Govett Group generated revenues of $37.5 million ($32.2 million) and made a pre-tax profit of $18 million ($13.8 million). The market reacted well and the shares rose 22p to 242p.

KVÆRNER a.s ("KVÆRNER")
OFFERS FOR
AMEC p.l.c. ("AMEC")

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- KVÆRNER'S OFFERS FOR AMEC CLOSE AT 1.00 PM ON

MONDAY, 18TH DECEMBER, 1995

- THE OFFERS ARE FINAL AND WILL NOT BE EXTENDED*
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- Kværner is offering £1 nominal of 8.125% unsecured, subordinated bonds 2009 per AMEC Preference Share or a 90 pence Cash Alternative
- If you have any questions as to how to complete the Form of Acceptance, or have not received or have misplaced your Form of Acceptance, please contact Lloyds Bank Registrars on dedicated telephone number 01903 702767

*The right is reserved to revise and/or increase and/or extend the Offers if a competitive situation (as determined by the Panel) arises or otherwise with the consent of the Panel. If on 18th December, 1995 the Ordinary Offer is unconditional as to acceptances each of the Offers will remain open for acceptance for not less than 14 days after that date.

هكذا من الأصل

Bad tax advice 'causing hardship'

By Robert Bruce

A REPORT has warned of the growing danger of cowboy tax advisers as the tax system grows ever more complex and as the date for the introduction of a self-assessment system becomes closer.

The report, sponsored by TaxAid, the tax advice charity, and the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, reveals cases in which taxpayers have gone bankrupt as the result of poor advice from incompetent tax advisers. It calls for the setting up of a steering group on proper regulation of the tax advice business.

The report's author, Sue Green of Bristol University, revealed that cases of "complete incompetence" were rife. She said there was "increasing evidence that is emerging of cases where taxpayers have been given either incompetent or dishonest tax advice. This can cause very real distress as well as financial hardship."

David Brodie, of TaxAid, said there was an urgent need, with a self-assessment system due to be introduced in 1997, for all tax advisers to have decent minimum qualifications. "Despite official denials the introduction of self-assessment will increase the number of people needing tax advisers," he said.

The report draws on the experience of Australia, where self-assessment was introduced in 1985. Problems of confused taxpayers, allied with the boom in high street tax shops staffed by unqualified advisers, led to the recommendation of a regulated system of tax agents.

The report's findings were welcomed by Gerry Hart, president of the Chartered Institute of Taxation: "We are strongly of the view that taxpayers should be protected from unscrupulous and incompetent tax advisers."

The report advocates the setting up of a National Tax Council which would regulate advisers who would have to register as tax agents and hold professional indemnity insurance.

Peter Greenall, left, managing director, and Andrew Thomas, chairman and chief executive, served up encouraging predictions for Greenalls Group

Greenalls toasts record profits in wake of Devenish deal

By Philip Pangalos

GREENALLS GROUP, the pubs to hotels group, expects "substantial" benefits from Boddington, the pubs company that is being swallowed up after October's £527 million agreed deal.

Peter Greenall, managing director, is optimistic on prospects for the enlarged group as Greenalls's annual pre-tax profits topped £100 million for the first time.

A long, hot summer and the integration of Devenish helped pre-tax profits, excluding exceptional items, to advance 14 per cent to £100.5 million in the year to September 29, with an underlying increase of 18 per cent. Turnover expanded 6.3 per cent to £765.9 million.

Pub profits from Greenalls Inns climbed 9.4 per cent to £83 million, while higher occupancy levels and room rates helped UK hotels to rise 11.2 per cent to £22 million and Premier Lodges 6.8 per cent to £17.5 million.

Andrew Thomas, chairman and chief executive, said: "These results reflect the measures we have taken over the last few years, including the acquisition and full integration of Devenish, the introduction of new beer supply agreements, the successful targeting of capital expenditure and the elimination of non-core businesses."

Mr Thomas said the acquisition of Boddington was a major step in the continuing evolution of Greenalls, which now runs the UK's biggest independent retail pub chain with nearly 2,200 pubs, including 458 from Boddington.

He said the process of integration is "well under way" and will bring substantial synergies, though there will be 500 job losses. Boddington is expected to deliver synergies of at least £18 million this year.

Mr Greenall said trading in the current financial year has been encouraging in all businesses. He said: "They are all trading well. Pubs and pub restaurants continue to make progress, and the gradual recovery in the economy has led to further improvements in both occupancy and room rate in hotels."

There is a final dividend of 8.44p (7.766p), due to be paid on March 1, giving an increased total of 14.2p (13.1p), up 8.4 per cent, from earnings ahead 15.5 per cent to 36.8p (31.9p) a share.

Year-end gearing stood at 51.4 per cent, though Boddington pushes pro forma gearing up to nearer 75 per cent, with interest cover of 3.9 times. Mr Greenall expects gearing to drop to nearer 70 per cent in the current year.

Operating profits from off-licences increased by 28.4 per cent to £5.5 million, with an underlying advance of 32.4 per cent, in spite of the effects cross-Channel booze cruises. Sales per outlet increased 4.2 per cent, while increased purchasing agreements helped the operating margin to rise to 3.6 per cent (2.8 per cent).

Mr Greenall added that a review of the group's pubs operations had resulted in the disposal of 69 pubs as well as other unlicensed properties.

Where milking industry is big business

Joanna Pitman on South Korea's corruption scandal

The raging corruption scandal in South Korea that has brought bribery charges against two former presidents and seven top industrialists has exposed to the world, perhaps more graphically than ever before, the degree to which the country's economy has been built on the unstable sands of political favouritism.

Another 30 "pillars of the business community" have been indicted in connection with the slush fund allegedly accumulated by Roh Tae Woo, who was president for five years from 1988, but prosecutors have declined to press charges, concerned, it is assumed, that to do so could threaten disruption of the booming economy.

Mr Roh has been charged with accepting bribes worth $370 million from industrialists and amassing a personal fund of $650 million that he invested in property and securities used to make loans to his favourite industrial groups.

The seven biggest fish charged with bribing the ex-president for contracts, are Lee Kun Hee, chairman of Samsung, Korea's largest industrial conglomerate, or *chaebol*, Kim Woo Choong, chairman of Daewoo, and the heads of five other *chaebol*, all with interests in electronics, ship-building, construction, and cars.

The relationship between politicians and industry has been one of mutual dependency since the late 1960s. The political class, backed by the military until the present civilian president, Kim Yung Sam, took office in 1993, was always aware that it could not achieve its aims without a powerful industrial sector and, accordingly, built up interest in the *chaebol*. It should surprise no one that, over the years, the politicians may have handed out industrial contracts not only the basis of prestige and personal connections, but, more importantly, on the basis of financial incentive.

Such relationships were forged in the early 1970s as South Korea's economy was forced into a growth spurt at rates of 11 and 12 per cent a year. Foreign trade was strictly controlled and resources were directed away from the consumer sector to strategic heavy industries.

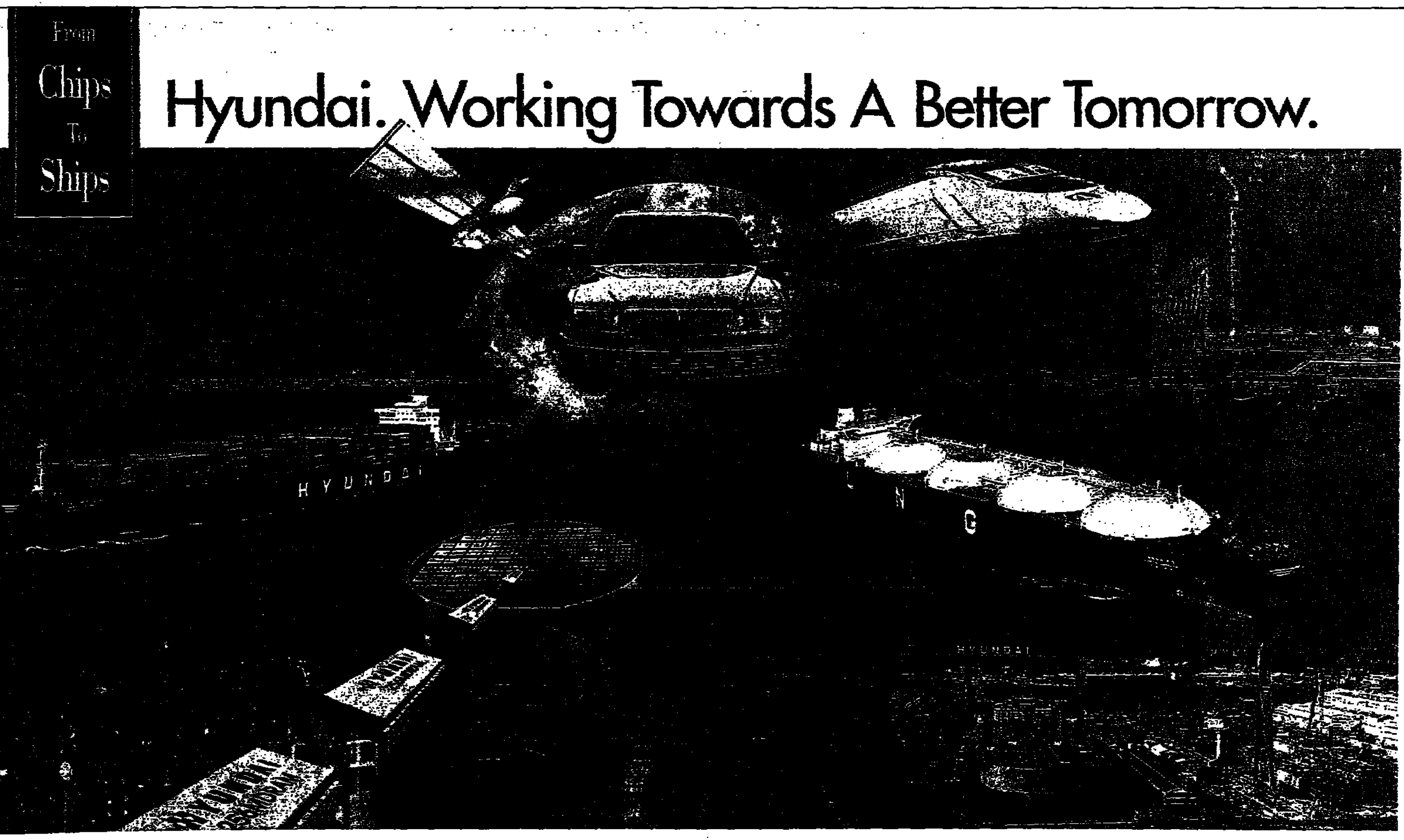
A select group of internationally competitive companies was nurtured with subsidies and tax credits and supported by low-wage, low-productivity suppliers.

The results of the growth spurt were hugely successful, but South Korea's political class is now being shown up for milking industry for cash in return for contract favours.

The scandal has gripped the country, particularly the jailing of Mr Roh's predecessor, Chun Doo Huan, for his role in crushing the 1980 pro-democracy uprising. But that is being seen as a way of distracting the public from suspicion that Mr Kim's 1992 campaign was illegally funded.

The press refers to the scandal as "structural corruption", an implicit acknowledgement that it is a necessary aspect of the Korean economic system in its current condition.

Although the Government is preparing measures to to improve corporate governance, it is reluctant to act severely because that could trigger damaging repercussions throughout industry and ultimately slow the economic growth rate, on target this year for 9.3 per cent. And that in turn would harm Mr Kim's poll prospects in 1997.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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AIB UNIT TRUST MANAGERS LTD				
01895 259 783				
Grofund Amer	201.40	213.10†	+ 2.20	0.16
Grofund Equity	270.70	287.90	+ 0.20	2.03
Grofund Euro	238.30	252.30	− 0.90	1.37
Grofund Extr Bal	124.40	128.90		0.80
Grofund Gilt	77.35	79.74	+ 0.39	4.64
Grofund Japan	175.70	186.00†	+ 3.30	
AXA EQUITY & LAW UNIT TST MGRS				
01203 553 231				
General Acc	617.20	656.70	+ 1.80	2.58
General Inc	530.30	564.20	+ 1.60	2.58
UK Growth Acc	416.50	443.10†	+ 0.70	2.81
UK Growth Inc	277.50	295.30†	+ 0.60	2.81
Higher Inc Acc	765.30	814.20†	+ 0.70	4.07
Higher Inc Inc	425.90	453.10†	+ 0.40	4.07
Gilts/Fxd Int Acc	206.50	216.00		5.52
Gilts/Fxd Int Inc	94.94	100.20	+ 0.22	5.52
Nth America	340.70	362.50†	− 2.10	
Europe	317.40	337.70	− 0.10	0.86
Brit Excel0	83.10	88.41†	+ 0.19	2.90
Brit Fndmtls Acc	111.60	118.80		4.71
Brit Fndmtls Inc	78.13	83.12		4.71
Global Opps	95.22	101.30†	+ 0.10	0.26
Balanced Acc	60.52	64.39	+ 0.12	2.81
Balanced Inc	57.91	61.61	+ 0.10	2.81
Japan Acc	47.66	50.71	+ 0.94	
Pac Basin Acc	383.40	407.90†	− 0.68	1.00
ABBEY UNIT TST MGRS				
0345 717 373				
Gilts & Fixed Int	132.40	140.50†	+ 0.20	7.12
High Inc Equity	175.10	187.30	+ 0.50	4.20
Worldwide Bond	295.10	310.60†	+ 0.30	4.50
American Growth	340.10	363.60	− 2.40	0.35
Asian Pacific	314.40	336.30	+ 0.70	
Assets & Earnings	286.50	304.80†	+ 0.50	2.85
Euro Capital Acc	160.60	171.70	− 0.20	0.60
Extra Inc	44.70	47.55	+ 0.04	8.45
General	261.70	278.40	− 0.60	2.99
Global Opps	58.87	62.63	+ 0.11	0.48
Japan	125.90	134.00	+ 2.30	
Managed Inc	47.50	50.53	+ 0.10	4.60
Mastertrust	153.30	164.00	− 0.80	1.42
US Emerging Cos	179.80	191.30	− 1.10	
Ethical	74.37	79.12	− 0.09	2.48
International	127.40	135.50	+ 1.10	0.60
Dividend & Growth	65.99	70.19	− 0.15	4.01
Global Gwth & Sec	70.68	75.51	+ 0.18	2.58
ABERFORTH UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0131 220 0733				
UK Small Cos	1965.00	2040.00	+ 0.40	
ABTRUST UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0800 833 580				
Amer Inc & Growth	55.95	58.11	+ 0.12	0.53
Cash	50.05	50.05†	+ 0.01	5.84
Emerging Mkts	65.12	69.02	− 0.27	0.05
European	129.30	134.50	+ 0.29	
Exempt	1015.20	1085.60	+ 2.70	1.72
Extra Income #	48.70	51.53†	− 0.02	6.60
Far East Emg Eco	118.60	124.60	− 0.10	0.50
Fixed Interest #	23.58	24.52†	+ 0.10	9.58
Fund Inc Tst	165.30	173.50	− 0.10	8.97
Japan	189.90	197.50	+ 4.00	
Latin American	48.17	50.56	+ 0.16	0.57
Pacific	80.45	84.47	+ 0.24	0.31
Property Share	62.56	65.67	+ 0.05	2.57
UK Emerging Cos	69.45	73.67	+ 0.02	1.88
UK Growth	48.93	51.91	+ 0.03	2.26
Abtr World Port #	78.24	79.71†	+ 0.04	2.06
Ethical	72.16	75.04†	+ 0.13	2.35
Aberdeen Gilt Inc #	50.80	50.80†	+ 0.06	7.39
For AEGON see Mathesn				
AIRWAYS UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0171 256 5868				
Recsd Property	97.22	104.20		5.10
ALLCHURCHES INV MGMT SVS LTD				
01452 305 958				
Amity Income	82.72	87.77		2.34
Income Builder Inc	75.65	80.48†		2.70
ALLIED DUNBAR UNIT TSTS PLC				
IFA dlg: 01793 610 366 Client dlg: 01793 514 514				
Balanced Trusts				
Growth & Income	256.60	274.30	− 1.30	2.84
Capital	455.60	487.00	− 2.30	1.70
Balanced	753.10	805.00	− 2.80	2.47
Accumulator	1432.00	1530.00†	− 5.00	2.65
Income Trusts				
American Income	57.55	61.52	+ 0.13	2.89
High Income	421.80	450.90	− 1.50	3.42
Equity Income	237.70	254.10	− 0.90	3.28
High Yield	256.30	273.90†	− 1.00	3.17
Govt Securities	34.78	36.71	− 0.16	5.77
International Trusts				
Amer Spec Sits	189.90	203.00	+ 1.00	0.34
European Growth	43.13	45.97	+ 0.35	0.01
International	178.80	191.00	− 1.00	0.17
Japan	206.70	220.00	− 3.10	0.01
Pacific	401.50	429.20	+ 3.10	0.01
Secs of America	540.80	576.30†	− 0.10	0.40
Wwide Fixed Val	53.16	56.82	+ 0.31	0.21
Specialist Trusts				
Asset Value	569.80	609.10†	− 2.00	2.09
Cmdty & Gilt	44.68	47.76	− 0.13	4.26
Smaller Cos	189.30	202.30†	− 0.30	1.10
2nd Smaller Cos	179.30	191.60	− 0.30	1.22
Recovery	150.20	160.50†	− 0.70	1.63
Met Min & Cmdty	171.80	183.60†	− 0.30	0.65
Oseas Earnings	379.80	406.00	− 3.00	1.66
Technology	219.80	234.90†	− 0.50	0.01
UK Special Sits	520.10	555.90†	− 1.30	1.56
B & C E UNIT TRUST MGMT LTD				
01293 526 911				
Cntrctl Dist Pens	110.40	115.10		3.04
Foundrs Persl Pens	66.07	68.66		1.44
BSI-THORNHILL UNIT TST MGRS LTD				
0171 600 0033				
Capital	76.75	81.65	+ 0.17	1.78
International	67.81	72.14		
BAILLIE GIFFORD & CO LTD				
0131 222 4242				
America	300.20	322.40	− 0.49	
Bond	121.90	128.20	− 0.50	6.53
Em Smlr Cos	111.00	118.10	− 0.20	1.70
Conv & Gen #	68.52	72.89	− 0.02	5.33
Europe	236.10	251.10	− 0.10	0.62
Euro Smlr Cos	106.70	113.80	+ 0.60	1.62
Income Gwth	369.80	393.40	− 1.40	3.88
Japan	331.80	353.40	+ 5.91	
Latin American	68.51	72.20	− 0.12	
Pacific	106.60	113.40		1.24
UK Smlr Cos	58.81	62.56	− 0.11	1.29
Japan Fd	688.60	710.30	− 8.00	
Mngd Fd	191.90	202.90	+ 0.20	2.94
BANK OF IRELAND FUND MGRS LTD				
0171 489 8673				
Brit & Oseas	336.80	354.50		0.81
Capital Gwth	119.30	125.60		2.61
Wwide Opps	205.40	216.20		0.93
BARCLAYS UNICORN LTD				
0131 534 5544				
Balanced Trusts				
Bcld Inv Fd Inc	388.20	404.30†	+ 1.20	2.56
European Bd Inc	96.32	99.73	+ 0.03	6.82
Exempt	77.65	82.83	+ 0.17	4.05
Financial	92.49	98.92†	+ 0.04	2.45
500	467.00	508.10	+ 0.10	2.63
General	297.10	318.10	+ 0.60	2.56
Property	237.00	254.30†		6.49
Trustee	209.50	223.40	+ 0.30	2.25
Income Trusts				
Cash Inc	100.60	100.60		6.05
Extra Income #	127.40	136.30	+ 0.30	4.93
Gilt & Fxd Int	59.22	61.21†	+ 0.38	8.12
Income	565.10	604.40	+ 2.10	3.80
Income Builder #	66.81	71.26	+ 0.16	5.49
Intl Income	68.58	72.95	+ 0.14	3.18
Growth Trusts - UK				
Capital	132.40	141.30		2.22
Leisure	149.00	159.40	− 0.20	1.11
Recovery	441.90	472.70	− 1.90	2.61
Smllr Cos Inc	48.45	51.96	+ 0.15	2.14
Special Sits	337.90	361.30	− 0.20	1.52
Growth Trusts - Overseas				
America	162.30	172.60†	+ 0.40	0.29
Aust Acc	268.50	287.00	+ 2.50	1.87
Aust Inc	161.90	173.00†	+ 1.40	1.87
Euro Gwth Inc	167.60	177.90	+ 0.20	0.73
-do- Accum	181.00	192.10	+ 0.20	0.73
Japan & Gen Inc	165.90	177.10	+ 3.30	
-do- Accum	167.80	179.10	+ 3.30	
Japan Spec Sits	76.15	81.10	+ 1.22	
Wrld Tech Inc	92.50	98.74	+ 0.29	
Worldwide	186.90	198.40	+ 1.40	0.62
BARING FUND MANGERS LTD				
0171 214 1004				
American Growth	117.70	124.50	+ 0.10	
Amer Smlr Cos	153.00	163.60	− 1.50	
Convertibles	55.38	59.36	+ 0.03	5.70

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
CAZENOVE UNIT TRUST MGMT LTD				
0171 606 0708				
Cazenove Portfolio	94.15	100.56	− 0.01	2.54
American Portfolio	112.77	119.57†	+ 0.07	0.94
European Portfolio	111.17	118.51	+ 0.11	0.49
High Income	52.46	52.58†	− 0.15	8.00
Japanese Portfolio	69.87	74.29	+ 1.58	
Pacific Portfolio	145.63	156.80†	+ 0.76	1.43
UK Inc & Growth	86.93	93.04	− 0.20	3.03
Utility & Bond	57.36	58.05	− 0.16	6.54
CENT BD OF FIN OF CHURCH OF ENG				
0171 588 1815				
Inv Fund	721.54	732.44	+ 1.17	4.40
Fxd Int Sec	156.56	157.18	+ 0.47	9.10
COIF CHARITY FUNDS				
0171 588 1815				
Investment Inc	722.94	733.86	+ 0.81	4.35
Investment Acc	1831.84	1832.32	+ 3.57	
Fixed Int Inc	130.36	130.88	+ 1.40	8.79
Fixed Int Acc	216.95	217.81	+ 2.34	
CITY FINANCIAL UT MGRS LTD				
0171 407 5966				
Beckman Intl	93.61	98.76		3.81
Beck Bio-Tech	43.13	45.52†	+ 2.46	
Accm Ethical 1st	161.89	170.00†		0.73
City Fin Assets	77.55	81.43		2.05
City Fin America	104.81	110.06		
City Fin Intl	87.68	92.07†		0.69
City Fin Japan	151.54	159.13		
Friars Hse Cap	296.07	309.90		2.36
Friars Hse Inc	193.21	209.62†		4.55
Brickley Wrld Grth	138.58	146.89		
Fairmnt Cap Gth	145.55	153.71†	+ 3.49	
Fairmount Intl	153.80	161.89†	+ 2.69	
J Sd Inc/Gth Inc	57.04	59.90†	+ 0.58	2.44
CITY OF LONDON UNIT TST MGRS LTD				
0171 711 0771 Admin: 01277 227 300				
Emerging Markets	54.61	57.94	+ 0.26	
CLERICAL MEDICAL UT MGRS LTD				
0800 373 393				
American Gwth	76.53	81.85	− 0.49	
Dragon Growth	68.45	73.20	+ 0.04	0.93
Equity High Inc	85.84	93.12†	+ 0.20	4.10
-do- Accum	121.38	130.17	+ 0.28	4.10
Extra Income Inc	27.06	28.50	+ 0.15	7.06
Extra Income Acc	28.16	29.66	+ 0.16	7.06
European Gwth	57.26	60.91	− 0.08	1.09
Evergreen	29.29	31.32	+ 0.17	
General Equity	94.73	100.51	+ 0.35	2.91
Japan Growth	52.88	56.56	+ 0.97	
Pedigree Gwth	56.82	61.08	+ 0.27	2.80
Prof Sm Cos Inc	33.20	35.32†	+ 0.08	1.55
-do- Accum	34.96	37.19	+ 0.08	1.55
Retirement Inc #	36.86	38.57	+ 0.06	5.87
Special Sits	42.64	45.36		2.11
UK & Overseas	55.30	58.83	+ 0.26	0.74
COLONIAL UT MGRS LTD				
01634 896 000				
Capital	75.22	78.35	+ 0.29	1.94
Balanced	65.29	66.00	+ 0.18	4.13
COMMERCIAL UNION FINANCIAL MGMT INTL LTD				
0181 686 9818				
PRESTIGE PORTFOLIO (PPT FUNDS)				
Income Funds				
Equity Inc	169.79	180.63	+ 0.19	4.84
Fixed & Convertible	41.13	43.76	+ 0.15	6.64
Monthly Inc Plus	50.21	53.42	+ 0.27	8.39
Preference Share	47.21	50.22	+ 1.05	7.76
Balanced Funds				
High Yield	132.17	140.61	+ 2.96	5.78
Managed Fund	73.14	77.81	+ 0.21	3.03
UK Growth Funds				
Smaller Cos	43.27	46.03	− 0.10	1.77
-do- Accum	50.36	53.57	− 0.12	1.77
UK & General	88.13	93.82	+ 0.14	2.72
-do- Accum	113.19	120.41	+ 0.18	2.72
UK Growth	166.83	177.48	+ 0.25	2.28
International Growth Funds				
Europe Growth	198.90	211.60	+ 0.15	0.11
Far Eastern Gth	133.47	141.99	+ 0.67	
Global Bond	84.94	90.24	+ 0.17	5.86
Japan Growth	120.75	128.46	+ 2.05	
North Amer Gth	213.27	226.88	+ 0.14	
Oriental Growth	80.18	85.30	− 0.03	0.06
Worldwide Gth	72.26	76.87	+ 0.51	0.10
OTHER CU TRUSTS (NON PPT FUNDS)				
Deposit Fund	92.26	92.26	+ 0.01	6.13
Homestead Fund	87.34	92.91	+ 0.22	1.63
Quilter Fund	144.60	153.83	+ 0.27	1.98
CONSISTENT UNIT TST MGMT CO LTD				
0171 407 5966				
Consistent UT	33.33	35.67	+ 0.18	3.34
COOKE (HENRY) INV FUNDS LTD				
0800 526 358				
Growth	170.60	181.50†	− 0.50	1.78
Income	71.21	75.75	− 0.02	5.78
European	65.70	69.89	+ 0.10	0.64
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UK High Inc Inc	164.00	174.40†	+ 0.40	4.13
-do- Accum	217.40	231.20†	+ 0.60	4.13
UK Pref & F I Inc	59.96	63.58†	+ 0.21	4.93
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Japanese growth set to slow says OECD

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development yesterday lowered its forecast for Japanese economic growth to 0.3 per cent for this year and 1.8 per cent for next year, citing a sharp rise in the yen earlier this year as the main factor in an aborted recovery.

In June the OECD said gross domestic product should this year reach 1.3 per cent and in 1996 reach 2.3 per cent.

Tokyo was not happy with the forecasts, saying that the OECD appeared to have underestimated the stimulative effect of an expansionary economic package it introduced in September.

An official at the Government's Economic Planning Agency said: "The forecasts appear to be too bearish. I hope to see them revised in a OECD economic outlook due later this month."

Japan will set a growth target of more than two per cent for the business year starting next April, government sources said.

The OECD said that the increased government investment introduced in September, combined with increasing public works expenditure, more government loans for housing and a lowering of short-term interest rates to 0.5 per cent, should boost growth.

But it said possible brakes on rising consumer spending are limited employment prospects and falling land prices. A danger to the recovery as a whole would be another appreciation of the yen.

The report highlights Japan's need to resolve its problem of bad loans within the banking sector which, as a result of falling share and real estate prices, have risen to equal 40 trillion yen ($396 billion).

It says that while the banks are in the process of resolving their bad debt problem, it may take "many years for a few of them to return to a healthy financial position".

The report also says that to continue its recovery Japan must press on with deregulation. "This would contribute to making the Japanese market more open, accessible and efficient for domestic and foreign firms, while boosting the long-term productivity and growth prospects of the economy," it concluded.

Japan took a step down that road yesterday when a key government advisory panel proposed several deregulation measures, including splitting up the telephone company Nippon Telegraph and Telephone and lifting a ban on holding companies.

Japan is hoping to head off foreign criticism as well as cut its huge trade surplus.

Earlier this week, the US ambassador to Japan, Walter Mondale, said that Tokyo had made only "modest progress" on deregulation to date. He said that Washington wanted more to be done.

☐ Japan's current account surplus fell 52 per cent in October, its biggest drop in nearly five years, because of a flood of imports and slow exports, the Government said.

Pennington, page 25

Profits at Alvis show 50% rise

BY IAN MIELL

ALVIS, the defence equipment manufacturer, yesterday announced a 50 per cent rise in profits for the year to September 30.

The rise reflected the award of a number of large orders, including one of £40 million for target systems for the Apache helicopter.

Alvis's performance in the UK was mixed. The Alvis Vehicles subsidiary was bolstered by a major order from Indonesia, Alvis Logistics and Automotive Export Supplies increased sales and profits, but Unipower, which Alvis bought last year, and Alvis Transmissions both recorded losses.

Alvis is starting legal proceedings against the previous majority shareholder of Unipower, claiming that information provided at the time of acquisition was inaccurate.

Outside the UK, Avimo Singapore again reported strong pre-tax profits.

Pre-tax profits rose to £101.4 million from £80 million. Earnings per share were 8.8p, compared to a loss of 4.9p last year, while the dividend was 2p, up from 1p last year.

JAMES MORGAN

David Martin, left, of Sutcliffe, Speakman, and Stuart Lloyd, of Samuel Banner, yesterday at one of Banner's plants

Sutcliffe, Speakman in reverse takeover

BY OUR CITY STAFF

SUTCLIFFE, SPEAKMAN, the supplier of emission control equipment, is staging a reverse takeover of Samuel Banner Holdings for £20.6 million and is raising £16.1 million via a rights issue to finance it.

Samuel Banner is engaged in the blending and distribution of solvents and the packaging, canning and formulation of oil, chemical and detergent products.

David Martin, chief executive of Sutcliffe, Speakman, and Stuart Lloyd, managing director of Samuel Banner, will be joint managing directors of the enlarged group.

Investors in Sutcliffe, Speakman are being offered five new shares for every four held at 25p each. Existing shares remained at 27p yesterday. The company reported figures for the half year to September 30 showing pre-tax profits up to £540,000, from £310,000. Earnings per share were 0.44p (0.21p). The interim dividend rises to 0.325p (0.25p).

Flotation plans back on agenda at Dairy Crest

BY MARTIN BARROW

DAIRY CREST, the supplier of milk and other dairy products, hopes that plans for a stock market flotation can be revived as the milk industry emerges from its widespread restructuring after the dismantling of the Milk Marketing Board.

The Residuary Milk Marketing Board, which owns Dairy Crest, is again reviewing the future of its investment and, although no final decision has been taken, Dairy Crest said yesterday that a flotation on the stock market was still an option.

Mike Dowdall, chairman, said: "We are fully involved in the deliberations, which we hope will result in the establishment of Dairy Crest as a strong independent company, able to realise its full potential."

Mr Dowdall said that the company will compete effectively in the deregulated market and demonstrated real value for its current shareholders, the dairy farmers of England and Wales.

Yesterday, Dairy Crest reported a recovery in profits to £18.4 million before tax from just £1 million in the half-year to September 30. Comparable results for the first six months of the previous year were affected by a £16 million exceptional charge against restructuring costs.

Profits from the consumer foods businesses improved by 18 per cent to £9.1 million, with a rise in margins to 5.1 per cent from 4.8 per cent. Food services, which embraces ingredients sold to food manufacturers and the doorstep milk operations, was 42 per cent higher at £7.5 million.

A cash inflow of £19.9 million has left the company with net cash of £15.4 million, compared with borrowings of £1.6 million at the end of the last financial year. A dividend of £1.1 million will be paid to the Residuary Milk Marketing Board, leaving £11.7 million to be transferred to reserves. Net interest receivable was £1.1 million, up from £900,000 previously.

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Court of Appeal

Law Report December 8 1995

Court of Appeal

Home Secretary's decision not irrational

Regina v Secretary of State for the Home Department, Ex parte Pierson

Before Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Neill and Lord Justice Hirst

[Judgment December 5]

Given the wide discretion conferred on the Secretary of State for the Home Department by section 35 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 and the terms of his stated policy for the sentencing regime relating to mandatory life prisoners, his decision fixing the same penal term to be served by such a prisoner as that fixed by his predecessor, despite his concession that aggravating features previously relied on were absent, could not be stigmatised as irrational, nor had he acted unfairly *in reaching that decision.*

The Court of Appeal so held, allowing the secretary of state's appeal from Mr Justice Turner (*The Times* November 29, 1995) *who had granted John Pierson's* application for judicial review and had quashed the secretary of state's decision that the applicant, who was serving two concurrent *life sentences following his conviction* in 1985 of the murder of his parents, should serve at least 20 years in prison so as to satisfy the requirements of retribution and deterrence.

In 1988, under the regime then in operation, the secretary of state had fixed the penal term at 20 years, declining to adopt the 15-year period recommended by the trial judge and the Lord Chief Justice.

The applicant, although able to ascertain the length of the penal term was not, under that regime, told the period recommended by the judiciary, nor, if the secretary of state had departed from that recommendation, why he had done so.

On August 27, 1993, the secretary of state, in accordance with his policy statement of July 1993, *implementing the decision in R v Secretary of State for the Home Department, Ex parte Doody* ([1994] 1 AC 531), informed the applicant of the judiciary's recommendation, and that such recommendation would have been appropriate had the offence been a single premeditated one but that a longer period was necessary given that there had been a double murder and that the period had been fixed at 20 years.

In May 1994, subsequent to representations made by the applicant, the secretary of state reconsidered the matter and accepted that the features previously relied on as aggravating were not present. He concluded, however, that 20 years was still appropriate.

Mr David Pannick, QC, for the secretary of state; Mr Edward Fitzgerald, QC and Mr Tim Owen for the applicant.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS, giving the judgment of the court, emphasised:

1 That the court was in no way concerned in making the decision as to the period to be served as the penal term, it was none of its business and it had no views on the subject, nor was it called on in any way to consider the allocation of *sentencing powers between the* executive and the judiciary, again that was none of its business. Its sole concern was to rule on the lawfulness of the decision made in *the applicant's case.*

2 That the case involved no challenge to the secretary of state personally, he was named in the application because he was responsible for the department within which the decisions were made and references to him were to be read as references to the relevant decision-maker.

3 The decision under challenge did not determine when the applicant would actually be released. That date would depend on an assessment of whether he presented any, and, if so what degree of danger to the public if released.

4 The present case followed the decision in *Ex parte Doody.* Although the reasoning in that decision did not conclude all the present issues, the speech of Lord Mustill provided the essential background and was to be taken as *the starting point: see in particular* pp550, 559-560, 563-566.

In practice, the overwhelming majority of those sentenced to life imprisonment did not remain in prison for the whole of their lives and it had proved necessary to devise procedures which had two essential aims: the first, to ensure adequate punishment so that a term was served appropriate in the particular case for the purposes of retribution and deterrence, the penal element; and the second, to ensure that there was no release until no or no unacceptable risk would be presented to the public, the risk element.

The regime relating to discretionary life prisoners, governed by section 34 of the 1991 Act, was different from that relating to mandatory life prisoners with which the court was concerned in the present case.

The court referred to the statement made to the House of Commons by the Home Secretary (*Hansard* HC cols WA 863-5 July 27, 1993) outlining the steps he proposed taking to implement the decision in *Ex parte Doody* and summarising its effect:

1 That he was not obliged to adopt the judges' view on the penal *element of the sentence to be* served but was required to tell the prisoner what penal term they had recommended and to give reasons where he decided to depart from it: *and*

2 That he was required to afford the prisoner the opportunity to make written representations.

The secretary of state had fur*ther stated that the view which he* took at the beginning of a mandatory life sentence of the period necessary to satisfy the requirements of retribution and deterrence was an initial view of the minimum period necessary: and that it remained possible for himself or a future secretary of state exceptionally to revise that view either by reducing or increasing the period.

He had added that before increasing it, he would inform the prisoner that he was minded to take such action and would afford him the opportunity to make written submissions before any new decision was made.

*The court rejected the ap*plicant's first argument that it was irrational for the secretary of state to fix the same penal term as his predecessor despite his concession that the aggravating features were absent, and that the only rational course would have been to reduce the period significantly to reflect that absence.

In the court's view, the secretary of state's function was not an orthodox sentencing function. The judgments made in 1988 and 1994 were not reconcilable, but the explanation was plain. In 1994 the secretary of state did not share the view of his predecessor in 1988 that the 15-year penal term recommended by the judges would have been appropriate but for the aggravating features. He thought a longer term was called for anyway.

That decision raised questions about the secretary of state's powers and the fairness of his procedure, but his decision could not be stigmatised as irrational.

It could not have been condemned as irrational had the decision been *made* for the first time in 1994. The existence of an earlier decision with which the secretary of state in 1994 did not agree did *not* make his later decision irrational, whether or not that decision was open to challenge on other grounds.

The court referred to the ap*plicant's second argument, relying* on the secretary of state's use of the word "exceptionally" in his 1993 statement, that he had no power in effect to increase a penal term in *the absence of an exceptional* circumstance, of which there was none here.

In the absence of any curb on his discretion in section 35 of the 1991 Act, and in the light of *Doody*, the court could not accept that. The court could not cut down the wide discretion conferred by Parliament by attaching non-statutory conditions not required by procedural fairness to its exercise.

The secretary of state had done no more than indicate that the power to increase a penal term would only be exercised exceptionally. That could mean no more than that the power to increase would be exercised by way of *exception to the general rule that* once fixed a term would not be altered.

It might also mean that the power would be exercised infrequently. *The secretary of state had* not defined or restricted the occasions on which he would see fit to depart from the general rule and the court did not see how it, consistently with statute and the *Doody* decision, could take it upon itself to do so.

If, by way of exception to the general rule, the secretary of state revised upwards a penal term fixed by his predecessor on the ground that it did not adequately meet the requirements of retribution and deterrence there was nothing in law to stop him.

If that practice was seen as unacceptable, and one could well understand the despair of a prisoner serving a long sentence of imprisonment as the date of expiry of his penal term receded before him, the remedy had to lie elsewhere.

The court also rejected the applicant's third argument that if the secretary of state had been minded to proceed on a basis other than that disclosed in his letter of August 1993 he should have disclosed that fact and given the applicant an opportunity to respond before fixing the term on the new basis.

The court reviewed Mr Pannick's resistance to the argument and concluded, not without misgiving, that the decision was not shown to be unlawful and ought not to be quashed.

In particular, the court referred to the absence of any challenge by the applicant of the assertion, made on the secretary of state's behalf on oath, that he remained *willing to consider any further* representations from the applicant. Nor was there any challenge to his good faith.

The court had to accept that any further representations would be considered fairly, objectively and without a preconceived intention to reject them. The court attached great importance to that safeguard.

The appeal would be allowed. The applicant might address any representations he wished to the secretary of state. The court trusted him to give any such representations fair and careful consideration.

Solicitors: Treasury Solicitor; *Graham Withers & Co*, Shrewsbury.

Reasonable period for repaying arrears

Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society v Norgan

Before Lord Justice Evans, Lord Justice Waite and Sir John May

[Judgment December 5]

Where a court was exercising its discretion to grant relief to a borrower in default under the payment terms in a mortgage against the lender's claim to possession, the starting point for determining the reasonable period for repayment of the outstanding arrears was *the outstanding term* of the mortgage.

The Court of Appeal so held allowing an appeal by Christina Norgan against the dismissal by Judge Stephen O'Malley in Shaftesbury County Court on June 27, 1994 of her appeal from the refusal of a district judge to suspend the issue of a warrant for possession of her *farmhouse.*

Mr Miles Croally for the borrower; Mr Malcolm Waters for the lender.

LORD JUSTICE WAITE said that at common law the court had only a very limited jurisdiction to grant relief to a borrower in default under a mortgage. It could only adjourn the application for a short time to give the borrower the chance to pay up in full: *Birmingham Citizens Permanent Building Society v Caunt* ([1962] Ch 883, 912).

The Administration of Justice Acts of 1970 and 1973 had mitigated the rigour of that position allowing the court at its discretion to treat the sum due under the mortgage as being only the arrears of instalments or interest and allow a reasonable period for the borrower to pay off the arrears if it appeared he was likely to be able to do so.

The question was what exactly constituted a "reasonable period" for bringing payments up to date. In *First Middlesbrough Trading and Mortgage Co Ltd v Cunningham* ((1974) 28 P & CR 69) Lord Justice Scarman had referred to "a powerful presumption of fact in favour of the period of the mortgage being the 'reasonable period'."

In *Western Bank v Schindler* ([1977] Ch 1), the Court of Appeal had distinguished cases where the borrower was in default from those where he was not. In default cases, a reasonable period meant a reasonable period for the borrower to find the necessary money, although in cases where there was no default it might even be the whole remaining life of the mortgage.

Mrs Norgan had lived with her husband and five sons in a period farmhouse in Wiltshire with eight acres of land said now to be worth about £225,000.

They had borrowed £90,000 in 1986 on a term mortgage against the house from the Guardian Building Society, a predecessor of the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society.

The society's standard terms and conditions provided that if at any time any monthly instalment *should be in arrear and unpaid for* a month after becoming due, Guardian would be entitled to take possession of the property.

The Cheltenham society was a *member of the Council of Mort*gage Lenders whose statement of current practice provided means of helping some borrowers in difficulty. Those included lengthening *the term of a repayment loan,* deferring interest payments for a period and capitalising interest.

It seemed to his Lordship that the logic and spirit of the legislation required, especially in cases where the parties were proceeding the type of arrangement provided in the statement of current practice, that the court should take as its starting point the full term of the mortgage and pose at the outset the question: would it be possible for the borrower to maintain payment-off of the arrears by instalments over that period?

That approach would be liable to demand a more detailed analysis of present figures and future *projections* than had hitherto been customary. Borrowers might need to provide a detailed budget.

The court would also have to resolve disputes over how much of the *outstanding debt should* be attributed to interest and how much to principal. And expert evidence might be needed to determine if and when the lender's security might be put at risk as a result of imposing postponement of payments in arrear. But such problems should not be allowed to stand in the way of giving effect to the clearly intended scheme of the legislation.

Another factor strongly favouring the adoption of the full term of *the mortgage as the starting point* for calculating the "reasonable period" was the cost of multiple applications under section 36 of the 1970 Act.

One advantage of taking the period most favourable to the borrower at the outset was that if his or her hopes of repayment proved to be ill-founded and the new instalments initially ordered as a condition of *suspension* were not maintained but themselves fell into arrear, the lender could be heard with justice to say that the borrower had had his chance and that the section *36 powers should* not be used repeatedly to compel a lending institution to accept assurances of future payment from a borrower in whom it had lost confidence.

LORD JUSTICE EVANS agreed. The statement issued by the Council of Mortgage Lenders *said that members* sought to take possession only as a last resort.

Given its stated policy, his Lordship did not see how the building society could properly say that it *was not appropriate* to take account of the whole of the remaining part of the original term when assessing a reasonable period for the payment of arrears.

Considerations which were likely to be relevant in establishing a reasonable period were:

(a) How much could the borrower reasonably afford to pay, both now and in the future?

(b) If the borrower had a temporary difficulty in meeting his obligations, how long was the *difficulty likely to last?*

(c) What was the reason for the arrears which had accumulated?

(d) How much remained of the original term?

(e) What were the relevant contractual terms and what type of mortgage was it, that is, when was the principal due to be repaid?

(f) Was it a case where the court should exercise its power to disregard accelerated payment provisions (section 8 of the 1973 Act)?

(g) Was it reasonable to expect the lender, in the circumstances of the particular case, to recoup the arrears of interest (i) over the whole of the original term, or (ii) within a shorter period, or even (iii) within a longer period, that is, by extending the repayment period? Was it reasonable to expect the lender to capitalise the interest or not?

(h) Were there any reasons affecting the security which should influence the length of the period for payment?

In the light of the answers to those questions, the court could proceed to exercise its overall *discretion, taking account also of* any further factors which might arise in the particular case.

Sir John May agreed.

Solicitors: Clement Jones, Bangor; Mr S. J. Crawshaw, Gloucester.

Damages for wrongfully dishonoured cheque

Kpoharor v Woolwich Building Society

Before Lord Justice Evans, Lord Justice Waite and Sir John May

[Judgment November 30]

A person who was not a trader could recover substantial rather than nominal damages in contract for loss of business reputation resulting from a cheque being wrongly dishonoured by his bank.

The Court of Appeal so stated when dismissing an appeal by the plaintiff, Udele Edirin Kpoharor, and a cross appeal by the defendant, Woolwich Building Society, against a decision of Master Tennant to award £5,500 general damages to the plaintiff for injury to his credit by reason of the defendant wrongly dishonouring his cheque for £4,500 and the apparently discreditable reason they gave for so doing.

Mrs Daphne Loebl for the *plaintiff;* Ms Katherine McQuail for the defendant.

LORD JUSTICE EVANS said that both parties accepted that the claim was governed by the general law so that the plaintiff might recover general damages under the first part of the rule in *Hadley v Baxendale* ((1854) 9 Exch 341) and *special damages under the second* part when the necessary facts were proved.

The claim for general damages rested upon the first part, namely they were claimed as damages *"arising naturally (which meant in* the normal course of things) from the defendant's breach" per Lord Wright in *Monarch Steamship Co v A/B Karlshamns Oljefabriker* ([1949] AC 196, 221).

It was not disputed that a claim did arise for loss of credit or business reputation but the defen*dants said that the amount should* be nominal unless special facts were proved which were made know to them when the contract was made: in other words that this should properly be regarded under the second not the first part of the *Hadley v Baxendale* rule.

However, the plaintiff relied upon the line of authority which held that actual damages need not be alleged or proved by a trader, which he claimed that he was. The defendants said that they were *unaware of that and that the rule* did not apply for that reason alone.

The issue was whether a person who was not a trader for the purposes of the common law rule, and it was not at all clear what the limits of that category were, could recover substantial rather than nominal damages for loss of business reputation when his cheque was wrongly dishonoured by the bank.

It was abundantly clear that history had changed the social factors which moulded the rule in the nineteenth century. It was not only a tradesman of whom it could be said that the refusal to meet his cheque was "so obviously injurious *to his credit" that he should* "recover, without allegations of special damage, reasonable compensation for the injury done to his credit", per Lord Birkenhead in *Wilson v United Counties Bank Ltd* ([1870] AC 102).

The credit rating of individuals was as important for their per*sonal transactions*, including mortgages and hire-purchase as well as banking facilities, as it was for those who were engaged in trade, and it was notorious that central registers were now kept.

His Lordship would have no hesitation in holding that what was in effect a presumption of some damage arose in every case, in so far as that was a presumption of fact.

So the question became whether the authorities compelled the conclusion as a matter of law that *the presumption could not expand* beyond the category of trader.

In his Lordship's judgment they did not. The most directly relevant were *Gibbons v Westminster Bank Ltd* ([1939] 2 KB 882) and *Rae v Yorkshire Bank plc* ([1988] BTLC 35) neither of which was itself binding authority which precluded the court from considering whether a bank's customer who was not a trader was precluded from recovering substantial damages for injury to his reputation or credit *unless special damage* was alleged and proved.

If the trader was an exception to the general rules regarding damages for breach of contract then the explanation might lie in the tortious analogy with damages for injury to business credit.

Moreover, if the exception was a presumption of fact then it was open to the court to hold that changing social circumstances should cause the presumption to be reviewed and if necessary expanded in order to take those *changes into account.*

His Lordship went on to conclude that the plaintiff was in any case a trader, that the defendant was aware of that and that the award of general damages of £5,500 was an appropriate sum.

Lord Justice Waite and Sir John May agreed.

Solicitors: Anthony Gold Lerman & Muirhead, Streatham; Morgan Bruce, Cardiff.

Want of fairness in entry ban

Regina v Secretary of State for the Home Department, Ex parte Moon

Where the Secretary of State for the Home Department refused entry clearance to a person who wished to enter the United Kingdom, on the ground that entry would not be conducive to the public good, it was unfair and contrary to the principles of natural justice for the secretary of state to neglect to explain his reasons.

Mr Justice Sedley so held in the Queen's Bench Division on November 1 in upholding, to the extent of declaratory relief, the application of the Rev Sun Myung Moon for judicial review of the decision of the Home Secretary of October 27, 1995 that he should not be granted entry clearance.

HIS LORDSHIP said there was no perceptible reason why the secretary of state could not have put his adverse view as to giving entry clearance as a provisional conclusion to the applicant by fax via the Seoul Embassy and have invited his comments.

There was a want of fairness in failing to afford the applicant an opportunity to *know* why it was contrary to the public good to let him enter. It was precisely the unpopular applicant for whom the safeguards of due process were most relevant in a society which acknowledged the rule of law.

Right to award not property

In re a Bankrupt No 145/95

Before Mr Justice Knox

[Judgment October 22]

A right to or expectation of an award from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board was not "property" within the meaning of the Insolvency Act 1986, so as to become part of a bankrupt's estate hich, by virtue of section 306(1) of that Act, vested in his trustee immediately on his appointment taking effect.

Mr Justice Knox so held in the Chancery Division, in dismissing an appeal by Henry Robert Guest, the bankrupt's trustee, from an order of District Judge Glover.

Section 436 of the 1986 Act provides: " . . . 'property' includes . . . every description of property *wherever situated and also obligations* and every description of interest, whether present or future or vested or contingent, arising out of, or incidental to, property."

Mr Ian McCulloch for the trustee; Miss Marcia Shekerdemian for the bankrupt and her husband.

MR JUSTICE KNOX said that after the bankrupt *had in 1984* suffered serious injuries from a criminal assault she had applied to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, from which she had eventually received £200,000 in 1984. In the meantime, in December 1990, she had been made bankrupt.

Mr McCulloch had contended that although at that time her prosepct of recovering anything from the board was not a chose in action it was an interest which she had, either vested or contingent, and arising out of or incidental to property.

His Lordship said that purely as a matter of construction, the word "property" in the 1986 Act could not have been intended to describe something which had no present existence but might possibly come into existence on some uncertain event in the future. That view was supported by *Howard v Crowther* ((1841) 8 M & W 601), *Wilson v United Counties Bank Ltd* ([1920] AC 102) and *Heath v Tang* ([1993] 1 WLR 1421).

Accordingly, the hope which the bankrupt had in 1990 of getting an award, which in fact fructified two *years later, was not then part of* her property so as then to vest in her trustee in bankruptcy. The district judge's order was unimpeachable.

Solicitors: John Healy & Co, Brighton; Smart & Spicer, Eastbourne.

Correction

In *Attorney-General's Reference (No 3 of 1994)* (*The Times* November 29) the mother of the child did not die as a result of the attack. The respondent pleaded guilty to wounding her with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and was sentenced to four years imprisonment.

THE TIMES

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Human Rights Law Report

Strasbourg

Planning appeal procedure conforms with Treaty

Bryan v United Kingdom

(Case No 44/1994/491/573)

Before R. Ryssdal, President and Judges R. Bernhardt, F. Matscher, I. Foighel, Sir John Freeland, M. A. Lopes Rocha, J. Makarczyk, D. Gotchev, and U. Lohmus

Registrar H. Petzold.

[Judgment November 22]

The European Court of Human Rights unanimously held that the proceedings brought by Mr John Bryan before a planning inspector and in the High Court to challenge a planning enforcement notice served on him were in conformity with article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

Article 6 of the Convention *provides: "1 In the determination* of his civil rights and obligations or of any criminal charge against him, everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a *reasonable time by an independent* and impartial tribunal established by law. . ."

Section 174(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 pro*vides that an appeal against an* enforcement notice may be made to the Secretary of State for the Environment on any of the following grounds:

"*(a) that planning permission* ought to be granted for the development to which the notice relates or, as the case may be, that a condition or limitation alleged in *the enforcement notice* not to have been complied with out to be discharged; (b) that the matters alleged in the notice do not constitute a breach of planning control; . . . (g) that the steps required by the notice to be taken exceed what is necessary to remedy any breach of planning control or to achieve a purpose specified in section 173(4): (h) that the period specified in the notice as the period within- which any step is to be taken falls short of what should reasonably be allowed."

On December 4, 1989, Mr Bryan received an enforcement notice from the Vale Royal Borough Council requiring him to demolish two brick buildings of his property, on the ground that they had been erected without the required planning permission.

The applicant appealed against *the decision to the secretary of* state. The grounds of appeal concerned questions of both fact and law. On October 1, 1990 the apeal was dismissed by an inspec*tor employed by the Department of* the Environment.

The applicant appealed on points of law to the High Court, which dismissed the appeal on March 8, 1991. The High Court could review the inspector's findings of fact or the inferences drawn by him from those facts only to the extent that it found them perverse or irrational. Leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal was refused.

Mr Bryan applied to the European Commission of Human Rights on October 29, 1991. He contended that the proceedings which he had been able to bring under English law first before a planning inspector and then before the High Court, to challenge a planning enforcement notice served on him did not comply with article 6.1 of the Convention. The application was declared admissible on October 14, 1993.

Having attempted unsuccessfully to secure a friendly settlement the Commission drew up a report on June 28, 1994 in which it established the facts and expressed the opinion that there had been no violation of article 6.1 by eleven votes to five.

In its judgment, the European *Court of Human Rights held:*

Alleged violation of article 6.1

A Applicability

Before the Court the Government did not contest, as it had before the Commission, that the impugned planning proceedings involved a determination of the applicant's "civil rights".

B Compliance

1 Review by the inspector

The applicant first appealed to the secretary of state against the borough council's enforcement notice requiring him to demolish two buildings on his property. The inspector appointed to hear the appeal conducted an inquiry and decided to dismiss the appeal in its essentials.

The Court saw no reason to depart from the Government's view, which was shared by the *Commission and uncontested by* the applicant, that the proceedings before the inspector in the present case ensured the applicant a "fair hearing" for the purposes of article 6.1. It remained, however, to be ascertained whether, in relation to Mr Bryan's appeal, the inspector constituted an "independent and impartial tribunal".

In order to establish whether a body could be considered "independent", regard must be had, inter alia, to the manner of appointment of its members and to their term of office, to the existence of guarantees against outside pressures and to the question whether the body presents an appearance of independence: see inter alia *Langborger v Sweden* (June 22, 1989, Series A No 155 p16 paragraph 32).

It was true that the inspector was required to decide the applicant's planning appeal in a quasi-judicial, independent and impartial, as well as fair, manner.

However, as pointed out by the Commission in its report, the secretary of state could, at any time, even during the course of proceedings which were in progress, issue a direction to revoke the power of an inspector to decide an appeal.

In the context of planning appeals the very existence of that power available to the executive, whose own policies could be in issue, was enough to deprive the inspector of the requisite appearance of independence, notwithstanding the limited exercise *of the power in practice* as described by the Government and irrespective of whether its exercise was or could have been at issue in the present case.

For that reason alone the review by the inspector did not of itself satisfy the requirements of article 6 of the Convention, despite the existence of various safeguards customarily associated with an "independent and impartial tribunal."

2 Review by the High Court

*Following the inspector's de*cision, Mr Bryan appealed to the High Court. The notice of appeal included a challenge to the inspector's findings of fact, under section 174(2)(b) of the 1990 Act, but that ground was not pursued at the hearing in the High Court.

As was explained in *Albert and Le Compte v Belgium* (February 10, 1983, Series A No 58 p16 paragraph 29), even where an adjudicatory body determining disputes over "civil rights and obligations" did not comply with article 6.1 in some respect, no violation of the Convention could be found if the proceedings before that body were "subject to subsequent control by a judicial body that has full jurisdiction and does provide the guarantees of article 6.1".

The issue in the present case was whether the High Court satisfied the requirements of article 6.1 as far as the scope of its jurisdiction was concerned.

The Court noted that the appeal to the High Court, being on points of law, was not capable of embracing all aspects of the inspector's decision concerning the enforcement notice served on Mr Bryan.

In particular, as was not infrequently the case in relation to administrative-law appeals in the Council of Europe member states, there was no rehearing as such of the original complaints submitted to the inspector; the High Court could not substitute its own decision on the merits for that of the inspector; and its jurisdiction over the facts was limited.

However, apart from the classic grounds of unlawfulness under English law, going to such issues as fairness, procedural propriety, independence and impartiality, the inspector's decision could have been quashed by the High Court if it had been made by reference to irrelevant factors or without regard to relevant factors; of if the evidence relied on by the inspector was not capable of supporting a finding of fact; or if the decision was based *on an inference* from facts which was perverse or irrational in the sense that no inspector properly directing himself would have drawn such an *inference.*

Furthermore, in assessing the sufficiency of the review available to Mr Bryan on appeal to the High Court, it was necessary to have regard to matters such as the subject-matter of the decision appealed against, the manner in which that decision was arrived at, and the content of the dispute, including the desired and actual grounds of appeal.

In that connection the Court would once more refer to the uncontested safeguards attending the procedure before the inspector: the quasi-judicial character of the decision-making process: the duty incumbent on each inspector to exercise independent *judgment;* the requirement that inspectors must not be subject to any improper influence: the stated mission of the inspectorate to uphold the principles of openness, fairness and impartiality.

Further, any alleged shortcoming in relation to these safeguards could have been subject to review by the High Court.

In the present case there was no dispute as to the primary facts. Nor was any challenge made at the hearing in the High Court to the factual inferences *drawn by the* inspector, following the abandonment by the applicant of his objection to the inspector's reasoning under section 174(2)(b) of the 1990 Act.

The High Court had jurisdiction to entertain the remaining grounds of the applicant's appeal, and his submissions were adequately dealt with point by point.

Those submissions, as the Commission noted, went essentially to questions involving a panoply of *policy matters such as* development plans, and the fact that the property was situated in a green belt and a conservation area.

Furthermore, even if the applicant had sought to pursue his appeal under section 174(2)(b), the Court noted that, while the High Court could not have substituted its own findings of fact for those of the inspector, it would have had the power to satisfy itself that the inspector's findings of fact or the inferences based on them were neither perverse nor irrational.

Such an approach by an appeal tribunal on questions of fact could reasonably be expected in specialised areas of the law such as the one at issue, *particularly* where the facts had already been established in the course of a quasi-judicial procedure governed by many of the safeguards required by article 6.1.

It was also frequently a feature in the systems of judicial control of administrative decisions found throughout the Council of Europe *member states.*

Indeed, in the instant case, the subject-matter of the contested decision by the inspector was a typical example of the exercise of *discretionary judgment in the* regulation of citizens' conduct in the sphere of town and country planning.

The scope of review of the High Court was *therefore sufficient to* comply with Article 6.1.

3 Conclusion

Having regard to the foregoing considerations, the Court concluded unanimously that the remedies available to the applicant in relation to his complaints satisfied the requirements of article 6.1 of the Convention.

There had accordingly been no violation of that provision in the present case.

هكذا من الأصل

Shares slip on profit-taking

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

BANKS

1995 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
2937¼	2137½	ABN-AMRO	2840½	- 31¼	4.5	10.5
654	413	Abbey Nat	634	- 3	3.8	12.7
368	250	Allied Irish	365	- 1	4.0	10.6
298	198	Ans New Z	298		5.3	
4425	2531¼	Bank America†	4425	+ 93¾		
285	191½	Bank Scotland†	278	- 1	2.8	12.3
812½	557½	Barclays	776	- 8	3.6	10.6
486	288	Bk of Ireland†	485	- 3	3.5	9.7
525	418	Cater Allen	450		8.5	7.3
4718¾	2450	Citicorp	4718¾	+ 62½		
340½	216½	Close Bros	325	- 2	3.3	14.4
£162¼	£129¾	Commerzbk	£151½	- 50	3.6	
1375	993¾	Dai Ichi Kan Y	1293¾	+ 43¾	0.4	
3231¼	2775	Deutsche Bk	3100	- 28¾	2.4	
881¼	568¾	Espirito Santo	618¾	- 18¾	5.8	8.2
1811	1138¾	Fuji Bank Y	1420¾	+ 50¾	0.4	
490	395	Gerrard Nat	453		6.2	14.6
253	180	Hambros†	203	+ 1	4.8	
1012	589	HSBC	991	- 4	3.6	12.9
992	578	HSBC HK	989½	- 3½	3.8	12.6
390	228	Irish Perm	390	+ 2	3.1	9.0
463	353	Joseph (L)	463		5.1	25.6
145	85	King Shaxson	137		8.2	10.6
895	530	Lloyds	888	- 7	3.8	13.6
592	479	Nat Aust Bk	578		6.9	
697	454	Nat West	684	- 5	4.3	10.3
3000	2150	Ottoman Bank	2500		6.5	3.4
87	44	Rea Brothers	45		2.8	18.0
619	373½	Ryl Bk Scot	566	+ 7	3.7	12.6
1478	906¾	Schroders	1335		1.3	18.0
1180	823¾	Schroders N/V	1138		1.6	16.2
111	81	Singer & Fried	109½	- ½	4.2	11.3
625	246	Stand Chart	586	- 22	2.0	14.2
417	217	TSB	413	- 3	3.5	14.5
121	70	Union	105		3.6	
£146¼	9043¾	Wells Fargo	£141½	+ 131¼	2.1	
270	211	Westpac	265¾	+ ¾	5.1	
295	200	Wintrust	268		5.3	15.3

BREWERIES

1995 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
238	143	Ascot Hldgs	237	- 1		0.5
721	497	Bass	712	+ 17	4.1	
449	239	Boddington	447		2.5	23.0
192	137	Burtonwood Brwt	176		3.8	17.0
186	137	Eldridge P 'A'	185		3.2	
433	335	Fullr Sm 'A'	409		2.6	17.5
544	402	Greenalls Grp	534	- 6	3.4	
658	468	Greene King	629		2.8	16.8
297	240	Hardy Hansn	286		4.2	13.4
160	150	Heavitree	155		4.5	10.9
3425	3048	Holt J	3113		2.2	16.7
347	219	Mansfield†	316	- 3	2.1	15.9
321	266	Marston Thmp	311	- 1	3.0	14.5
543	391½	Morland	535		2.8	
8¼	6½	Paramount†	7¾		3.8	11.6
605	307	Regent Inns	605		1.4	23.8
2200	1287½	SA Breweries†	2200		1.6	29.5
640	482	Scot & New	601	- 3	3.9	16.0
337	230	Scot & New P/P	330			
218	173	Tom Cobleigh	197	- 4	1.7	32.0
308	211	Vaux Group	262		4.7	14.8
640	449	Wetherspoon JD†	640	+ 1	1.6	36.0
679	521	Whitbread†	659	- 9	3.9	16.3
585	483	Wolvhmptn D	548	+ 4	3.6	
310	185	Yates Bros	308	- 1	1.3	27.2
475	425	Young 'A'†	436		4.3	17.7

DISTRIBUTORS

1995 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
107½	88¾	Alb Lest	94		5.8	9.7
595	475	Adams & Harvey†	478		5.1	6.3
21	13	Alexanders	13½		6.5	22.7
113	88	Appleyard	91		8.2	9.0
4¾	3¼	Ass Br Eng	3½		2.1	28.5
633	518	BSS Group	555		4.5	15.7
39	31	Barst	38			
24½	15½	Bearing Power	17½		9.6	
28	18	Bogod A	26		3.4	9.2
483	345	Brammer	432	- 2	3.9	16.6
21	10½	Bridgend Gpl	17½	+ ½	1.4	
96	78	Brit Fittings	81		4.9	12.3
270	215	Caffyns	250	- 3	5.9	16.0
88	54	Central Mtr	72	+ 4	4.8	19.6
61	35	Cook (DC)	61	+ 2	3.5	8.8
320½	220	Cowie	297	+ 6½	4.0	12.8
155	125	Dag Motors	128		7.0	10.6
598	503	Dennans B	504		1.9	17.1
501	399	Diploma†	408	+ 9	4.4	
350½	236	Electrocomponents†	350	+ 7	2.1	23.8
247	153	Eurodis Elec	234	+ 2	2.2	16.2
235	64	Eurodollar	73	- 1	14.0	4.2
120	87	European Mtr	99		6.7	8.3
449	280	Evans Halshaw	287	+ 3	6.8	8.8
700	512	Farnell Elect	659	+ 6½	1.8	20.3
72	48	Fife Indmar	68		6.2	10.8
34½	15	Gardiner	18½		5.5	8.1
36½	16	Glenchewton	33	- ½	1.1	
108	61	Gowrings	86		3.3	14.3
200	148	Harris (Philip)	200	+ 6	4.7	12.6
201	142	Headlam	200		2.6	17.5
554	358	Henlys	499		2.5	18.6
137	81	Holders Tech	134		5.8	25.5
163	88	ISA Intl	153		1.3	18.7
430	205	Inchcape†	211	- 8	8.9	19.1
66	53	Jacks (Wm)	60		1.6	11.4
187	142	Kwik-Fit	181		3.2	15.5
358¾	264½	Lex Service	292	- 1	6.2	19.6
195	145	Lookers	149		6.4	8.2
22	9	Makro Grp	12		5.0	16.2
9¼	5	Middlesex	8½		0.7	19.5
71	36	Midstates	37			5.2
534	330	Norbain	495	- 2	1.9	16.9
268	78	Northamber	245	- 1	0.9	19.6
155	135	PCT	137		7.0	9.8
283	225	Pendragon	274		3.8	14.3
166	122	Perry Gp	150		6.4	11.3
146	126	Quicks Group	140		5.1	11.9
198	160	REA	185		2.7	22.0
3¼	2¼	Reece	3			
73	48	Rotsen	54	+ 1½	2.9	11.0
6½	2½	Russ. Go	3¼			
63½	37½	SEP Indl	61½	+ 1	2.4	20.5
17½	8½	Sidfire	11			6.2
74½	38	TLS	70		3.3	11.9
266	226	Time Products†	260		4.5	14.6
275	151	Vardy (Reg)	275		2.6	17.5
325	240	Wholesale Ftgs	325		4.5	20.3
80	57½	Wilshaw†	59	- ¼	1.7	14.0
90	56½	Wyko	85		1.8	
113	68	Young (H)	113	+ 1	4.4	

ELECTRICITY

1995 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
955	554	East Midlands	889	- 27	4.1	12.0
978	535	Eastern Grp	974		3.6	13.0
990	548	London Elec	889	- 36	4.6	10.5
1030	621	Manweb	1026	- 3	3.9	14.0
988	563	Midlands	975	- 8	4.8	12.2
581	421½	National Power†	450	- 4	4.5	9.5
271	158½	Natl Power P/P†	170	- 3	4.3	9.8
1006¼	632¼	Northern Elec	918	- 15	4.8	8.6
477	313	Nthn Ireland	445	- 2	4.1	9.7
1202	611	Norweb	1021	- 4	3.5	10.7
608	457½	PowerGen†	527	- 4	4.0	9.7
299	176½	PowerGen (P/P)†	214	- 5	3.9	11.7
379	303	Hydro-Elect	356	- 2	4.9	10.3
385½	306	Scottish Power	369	- 2	4.9	10.7
652	304	Seaboard	638		2.8	13.7
1170	630	Sth Wales	1168	+ 9	3.8	12.0
977	548	Southern Elec	935	- 8	4.8	10.3
955	599	Yorkshire Elec	886	- 19	4.3	11.1

1995 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
158	112	Brown Dolphin	155		4.8	16.1
712	625	Caledonia	712		3.0	21.9
2400	1900	Camellia	2000		2.3	18.4
22½	13	Carlisle	18		1.7	19.2
217	142	Cattles	215		3.5	19.0
35	16	Chrysle	24			
17½	13½	EFG	17		8.7	3.4
98	81	EFT Group	97	- 1	2.4	17.5
775	658	EFM	658	- 5	4.6	16.4
186	110	Exco	110		6.8	5.6
305	161	Gartmore	280		2.5	24.3
379	220	Govett	242	+ 22	7.8	3.9
1272	963	Henderson Adm	1188		4.7	24.2
266	162½	Invesco	264½	+ ½	2.3	18.2
49	41	Investment Co	41		7.1	12.9
233	198	Ivory Sime	229		4.1	17.0
248¾	164½	Jardine Strat	183¾	+ ¼	5.1	5.9
144	85	Johnson Fry	129		3.9	8.0
216	131	Lon Forfaiting	216		5.5	15.4
171	116	Lon Scot Bk	170		3.2	19.8
182	153	Man ED & F	156	- 1	7.9	7.8
1353	953	M & G	1263		3.1	22.1
346	224	MAI	339	- 1	3.2	16.6
130½	78	MAI 5.5% Cv Pf	125½		5.9	
956	680	MAM†	892	- 7	3.9	19.7
130	90	Nat Home Loan	101	+ 2	7.2	3.5
1775	1150	Perpetual†	1763	+ 28	2.8	
925	515	Provident	925	+ 8	3.8	18.1
330	245	Rathbone Brs	319		3.7	16.4
41½	24½	Rutland Tst	39½		4.1	17.2
356	281	S & U	291	- 2	5.6	8.6
133	105	SJP Capital	111		3.4	21.0
525¼	305¼	Swire Pacific	407	- 7½	2.5	19.4
78	42	Towry Law	44		7.1	
371	302	Transatlantic	348		5.1	21.3
26	6½	Trio Hldgs	7		1.8	11.5
26	19	Western Selectn	22		1.4	

PHARMACEUTICALS

1995 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
2100	425	Brit Biotech	1610	- 3		
345	103	Cantab Pharms	340			
614	233½	Celltech	556	- 24		
369	92½	Chiroscience	356	+ 9		
188	31	Cortecs	169	- 1		
268	103	Fisons	264		1.2	
912½	587	Glaxo Wellcome	886	- 19½	4.2	20.3
294	162	Medeva	256	- 11	1.8	16.5
719	273	Scotia	600	+ 1		
714	444	SmithKline†	703	- 8½	2.4	20.9
703	416	Smithkline Uts	693	- 7½	2.4	20.6
1337½	840	Zeneca	1316	- 18	2.7	36.8

1995 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
269¼	193	Frost Group†	193		4.1	16.2
81	46	Gieves	80		3.1	18.1
214	112	Goldsmiths Grp†	214	+ 2	2.0	19.4
654	508	GUS	632	+ 18	3.1	17.1
348	179	Hamleys	347		2.8	15.5
73	35	Hampden Grp	73		2.6	14.1
175	125	Hse of Fraser	163		4.2	21.0
83	57	Hughes (TJ)†	59½		6.6	13.1
168	95	Innovations	138	- 5	1.4	69.9
534	229	JJB Sports†	527	- 3	1.4	24.6
544	379	Kingfisher	508		3.8	16.9
151	100	Kingsbury Grp	151		2.0	21.3
365	208	Liberty	313		2.9	29.2
306	184	Lloyds Chemi†	268	+ 9	4.8	10.1
185	108	MFI	154	- 1	3.4	20.2
457	371	Marks Spencer†	436	- 3½	3.0	18.9
649	500	Menzies (John)	626		2.6	14.0
590	338	Moss Bros	589	+ 1	3.0	17.2
458	252	Next†	449	+ 5	2.8	24.7
54	27	OEM	37			
98	34	Oliver (G)	41		3.0	45.7
383	243	Oriflame Intl	383	+ 13	3.7	15.1
83	70	Partridge Fine	71		5.8	9.8
156	47	QS Hldgs	47	- 2	13.8	12.3
17½	5¼	Ramo Grp.A	15½			
193	113	Rosebys	192		3.2	22.2
120¾	96½	Sears	97½	- 1	5.1	15.5
24	11½	Signet Group	15½	+ ½		
484	321	Smith WH	414	- 11	4.7	14.6
950	638	Sotheby's†	908	- 5	1.7	
349	209	Storehouse	344		2.4	21.0
140	112	Stylo	120		4.9	10.3
203	143	T & S Stores	184		4.6	11.7
164	98	Tie Rack	163		2.1	17.0
4½	1	Upton & South	3			
598	424	Vendome	567		2.3	20.1
35	14	WEW Group†	17		5.1	10.1
67	35	Wld of Leather	53		3.5	64.1
193	155	Wyevale	193		3.3	17.2

SPIRITS, WINES & CIDERS

1995 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
566	476½	Allied Domecq†	492	- 2	6.0	19.8
499¾	390	Bulmer (HP)	494		3.0	16.7
146	99	Burn Stewart	142	- 1	4.4	30.6
461½	352	Grand Met	446	+ 4	4.3	15.4
536	404	Guinness	452	- 2	3.9	14.0
445	327½	Highland Dist†	332	- 8	3.0	15.0
217	175	Macallan-Glen	191	+ 2	0.9	42.4
710	600	Macdn Mrtn 'A'	645		2.1	18.1
681	632	Matthew Clark	650		4.0	
140	61	Merydun W	125		2.0	
259	129	Taunton Cider	246		3.6	24.0

BRITISH FUNDS

1995 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Gross red yld
SHORTS (under 5 years)						
106⅞	100⅞	Treas 14% 1996	100⅞	...	13.88	6.78
109⅛	103	Treas 15¼% 1996	103		14.73	6.37
107¼	103	Exch 13¼% 1996	103		12.86	6.31
104	103	Conv 10% 1996	103		9.66	6.11
101	97⅝	Treas 7% 1997	101¼		6.91	6.30
109	107	Treas 13¼% 1997	107		12.32	6.18
105	104	Exch 10½% 1997	104		10.00	6.12
104	100	Treas 8¾% 1997	104		8.40	6.20
117	114	Exch 15% 1997	115		13.00	6.27
107	102	Exch 9¾% 1998	106		9.14	6.30
102	96	Treas 7¼% 1998	101		7.11	6.36
100¾	94	Treas 6¾% 1995-98	100	...	6.75	6.73
117¾	114	Treas 14% 1998-01	116		11.97	6.47
124¾	120½	Treas 15½% 1998	122		12.62	6.51
114	105	Exch 12% 1998	114		10.49	6.55
108¼	100⅜	Treas 9½% 1999	108		8.79	6.56
118	111	Exch 12¼% 1999	118		10.52	6.64
111	105	Treas 10½% 1999	111¾		9.40	6.66
98	89	Treas 6% 1999	97		6.13	6.66
112	105⅜	Conv 10¼% 1999	111		9.15	6.77
MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)						
108	100	Conv 9% 2000	108		8.33	6.78
105⅝	96	Treas 8% 2000	104†		7.82	6.82
124	117	Treas 13% 2000	123		10.50	6.88
113	104	Treas 10% 2001	113		8.84	6.96
100	90	Treas 7% 2001	99		7.00	7.07
113⅝	103	Treas 9¾% 2002	113		8.58	7.16
104	94½	Treas 8% 2003	104†		7.66	7.22
116	105⅜	Treas 10% 2003	116		8.62	7.26
118	118	Treas 11½% 2001-04	119		9.68	7.13
82	70	Fund 3½% 1999-04	82½		4.24	6.14
113	103	Conv 9½% 2004	113		8.38	7.42
96	87	Treas 6¾% 2004	95		7.06	7.42
107⅝	97⅝	Treas 8½% 2005	107½†		7.91	7.43
113⅞	103⅝	Conv 9½% 2005	113		8.37	7.47
130	119	Treas 12½% 2003-05	130		9.59	7.39
100	94	Treas 7½% 2006	100†		7.47	7.45
102	92⅝	Treas 7¾% 2006	101		7.61	7.51
103	93⅝	Treas 8% 2002-06	103		7.71	7.50
124	113	Treas 11¾% 2003-07	124		9.47	7.34
107	97	Treas 8½% 2007	107		7.92	7.55
137⅝	128	Treas 13½% 2004-08	137½		9.82	7.30
111	101¼	Treas 9% 2008	111		8.08	7.60
103	94	Treas 8% 2009	103¾		7.74	7.53
LONGS (over 15 years)						
87	79	Treas 6¼% 2010	87¾		7.15	7.69
112½	101	Conv 9% 2011	111†		8.04	7.69
112	102	Treas 9% 2012	112		8.02	7.70
82	72	Treas 5½% 2008-12	81½		6.72	7.40
103	93	Treas 8% 2013	103		7.76	7.69
100	97	Treas 7¾% 2012-15	100		7.70	7.70
104	93	Treas 8% 2015	103†		7.73	7.66
111¼	100	Treas 8¾% 2017	110		7.89	7.71
141	127	Exch 12% 2013-17	140½ †		8.53	7.78
UNDATED						
45	40	War Ln 3½%	45		7.71	
31½	28	Treas 2½%	31		8.05	
50	45½	Consols 4%	50	+ ¼	7.93	
INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of:					10%	5%
215½	201	Treas IL 2% 1996	215			1.93
112	108	Treas IL 4⅝% 1998	112		1.60	2.79
178	165	Treas IL 2½% 2001	178		2.83	3.33
174	161	Treas IL 2½% 2003	174		3.01	3.41
115	108	Treas IL 4⅜% 2004	115½		3.03	3.41
183	168	Treas IL 2% 2006	183		3.14	3.42
166⅞	152	Treas IL 2½% 2009	168		3.20	3.44
173	157	Treas IL 2½% 2011	172		3.24	3.46
142	129	Treas IL 2½% 2013	142		3.28	3.49
152	137	Treas IL 2½% 2016	151		3.34	3.53
146	131	Treas IL 2½% 2020	145		3.40	3.56
122	108	Treas IL 2½% 2024	121		3.38	3.53
120	108	Treas IL 4⅛% 2030	120		3.38	3.54

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Gallwch sicrhau ffurflen gais a phecyn gwybodaeth drwy gysylltu a'r Adran Staff/Gwasanaethau Rheoli, Cyngor Bwrdeistref Ynys Mon, ar (01248) 750057 estyniad 504.

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Faculty of Social Sciences
CHAIR

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More information, the guidelines and a description of the position may be obtained from the above address, phone +47 55 58 90 56, or by fax +47 55 58 90 52.

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Further details and application forms should be obtained from Mr M G E Paulson-Ellis, Registrar and Secretary, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ, (telephone 01603 593648), closing date Friday 19 January 1996. Please quote references AC88 (International Relations) and AC87 (Politics).

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Department of English
CHAIR OF BRITISH LITERATURE

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Contact person at the Department of English is Mr Henning Målsnes, Chief Executive Officer, telephone +47 55 58 20 60. Address : Dept of English, Sydnespl 7, N-5007 Bergen, Norway.

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POSTS

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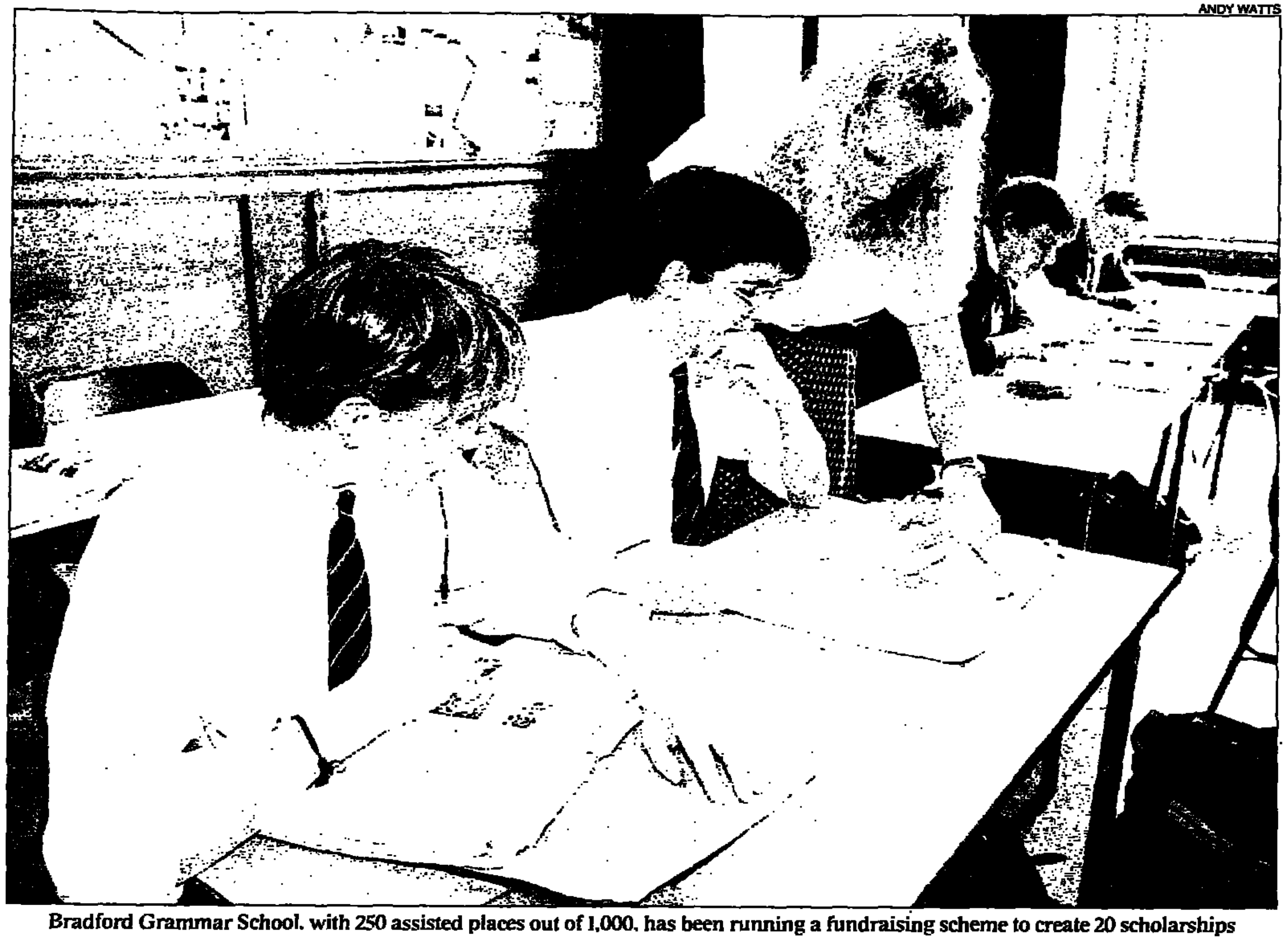
EDUCATION

Surviving without assistance

Hugh Thompson on the likely impact of Labour's plans to scrap assisted places

ANDY WATTS



Bradford Grammar School, with 250 assisted places out of 1,000, has been running a fundraising scheme to create 20 scholarships

Some independent schools get as many as half of their pupils on the assisted places scheme. So how will they handle the ending of the system if Labour wins the next election?

The 30,000 assisted places would double under a new Conservative government. Under Labour they would eventually disappear altogether. But no matter who wins, independent schools will survive.

Some schools in areas such as Cambridgeshire and Merseyside admit there may have to take fewer pupils. Others point to the four children who compete for every fee-paying place as proof that the market will pick up any slack. The rest feel they will be able to raise money for more scholarships and little will change.

Irene Bannister, deputy head of King Edward VI School for Girls in Birmingham, says: "I think the governors would keep the assisted places going for as long as possible through money from the school's own foundation. At present we have about 120 of our 550 girls on the scheme. However, no purse is bottomless and there may be a time when we would have to take in more fee-payers."

Manchester Grammar School already has several applicants for every place. If all Labour's education policies were carried through, it would mean the end not only of assisted places but also of selection at nearby state grammar schools in Altrincham and Trafford.

Dr Martin Stephen, High Master of MGS, says: "We would get some of the boys who traditionally would have gone to the other schools. Whatever happens, we wouldn't have a numbers problem — we are never short of applicants.

"The main point about assisted places is not that they boost your numbers but they improve the social mix. The scheme, which accounts for 280 out of our 1,500 students, makes the school less socially élitist. Without it we would be selecting not only on academic potential but also on social class. It would be an irony if a Labour government forced this on us."

One school which many felt might have problems in making up its 320 assisted places — that is half the school — is Wisbech Grammar, which is isolated in the Cambridgeshire Fens. The head, Robert Repper, says: "We would certainly lose some of our strong local connections because we would have to cast our net far further. We may also have problems filling every place. However, several local charities, including the legacy of one wealthy old boy, have promised support. It is another challenge that this school will face — we have been threatened before."

Liverpool College, with 190 assisted places out of 1,000, had 174 children taking the exam last year for 40 places. The school believes that in terms of numbers there will be little problem. The head, Barry Martin, says: "Other schools in this area may not be in quite such a fortunate position — after all, Liverpool is not as rich as London or other cities."

At some schools, such as King's School, Tynemouth, the state-funded scheme plays only a small part. While 15 per cent of the 650 secondary pupils have help with their fees, only a third are on the state scheme. David Younger, the head, says: "There are so few, it's not a problem for the school, only for the individuals who will miss out in the future. Perhaps we will provide a few more scholarships to keep the mix the way it is."

In nearby Newcastle, however, one third of the pupils at the Dame Allan's school are on assisted places, 300 in all. Terry Willcocks, the Principal, says: "It will be a challenge filling the places and there may well be difficulties. However, with nearly three pupils chasing every fee-paying place it shouldn't be impossible."

But many of the statistics about the number of pupils chasing places are exaggerated and involve double counting.

In a given area the same four pupils might take an exam to get into four different schools and will in most cases find a place at one of the schools. This means that each place is not covered four times, even though individual schools may feel that this is true.

Schools with the strength of Bradford Grammar School, which has 250 assisted places out of 1,000, plan to respond, not by taking those who would have failed before, but in fundraising to create more scholarships. The head, David Smith, says: "When we lost our direct-grant status we launched a massive appeal which raised enough to pay for 20 scholarships a year. We also have existing funds which could be made available."

Despite all this brave talk, some schools must suffer. Latymer Upper, in west London, has been reducing the numbers of assisted places and beefing up its junior school to "soften any blow". After all, 30,000 assisted places is the equivalent of 30 large city secondary schools.

In many urban catchment areas there are first, second, third and fourth choice independent schools. As the choice widens for fee-payers, those schools at the bottom of the pile are bound to feel the pinch.

If local charities are going to be called on to support the local educational institutions, other bodies such as voluntary organisations and hospitals must surely suffer.

Let children see the moral of Christmas

Nativity plays should be more than mere tinsel, suggests **Susan Elkin**

Last week on this page, Jane French made a plea for traditional Christmas celebrations in schools. Indeed, it is a hard-hearted adult who remains unmoved by a group of small children lisping *Away in a Manger*. The innocence of it all reminds grown-ups of the days when they too were captivated by romantic tales of fluffy lambs, a mother and baby, angels, kings and shepherds. How well I recall the glow of pride when my elder son tapped his six-year-old way on xylophone through *Little Donkey* in the school carol service.

Of course children should learn the legends which have underpinned European culture for two thousand years. Nativity plays, carol services and so on serve a purpose. They are a long established part of the way things are usually done in British schools, and I'm all for the traditional approach.

But there is a problem. And it's a serious one. If children are led too far along the sentimental route complete with banal accounts of the story, pretty props and sugary lullabies then their credulity is likely to be short lived. When the time comes to "put away childish things", almost all will jettison the Christmas story wholesale along with Father Christmas and the tooth fairy. Then there is nothing left but a spiritual void. Strip away the superficial romance and there are no solid foundations there to lead on to mature adult perceptions.

Now, how much you think this matters may depend on where you stand on the spectrum of religious belief from certain atheism to literal acceptance of Biblical "truth". Although my own position is centralist, inclining to sceptical, I believe — and the national curriculum concurs — that spiritual development in children is a vital entitlement.

As with all strong legends there is a deal of universal, irrefutable truth in the Christmas story. Consider the ruthless self-interest of Herod as opposed to the symbolic supernatural purity of Gabriel or the benevolent enthusiasm of the visitors to the stable at Bethlehem. Surely the need to understand and reconcile the opposing forces of good and evil (God and the Devil?) is the starting point for all religious thought?

Today's children face a troubled world which offers them the horrors of Bosnia, the assassination of a world leader at a peace rally, dreadful murders in Britain and so on. They need help, as perhaps never before, to come to terms with such conflicting traits of human nature — in a thoughtful way which resists a simplistic revenge mentality.

Then there are family values and the sense of new beginning which always comes with a birth. Also buried in the Christmas legend, with its pre-echoes of Easter, is the hard-to-accept truth that every birth, in a sense, ends with a death. All religions seek to acknowledge, explain and rationalise the mystery of the oblivion of death.

'There must be more emphasis on what the stories are really about'

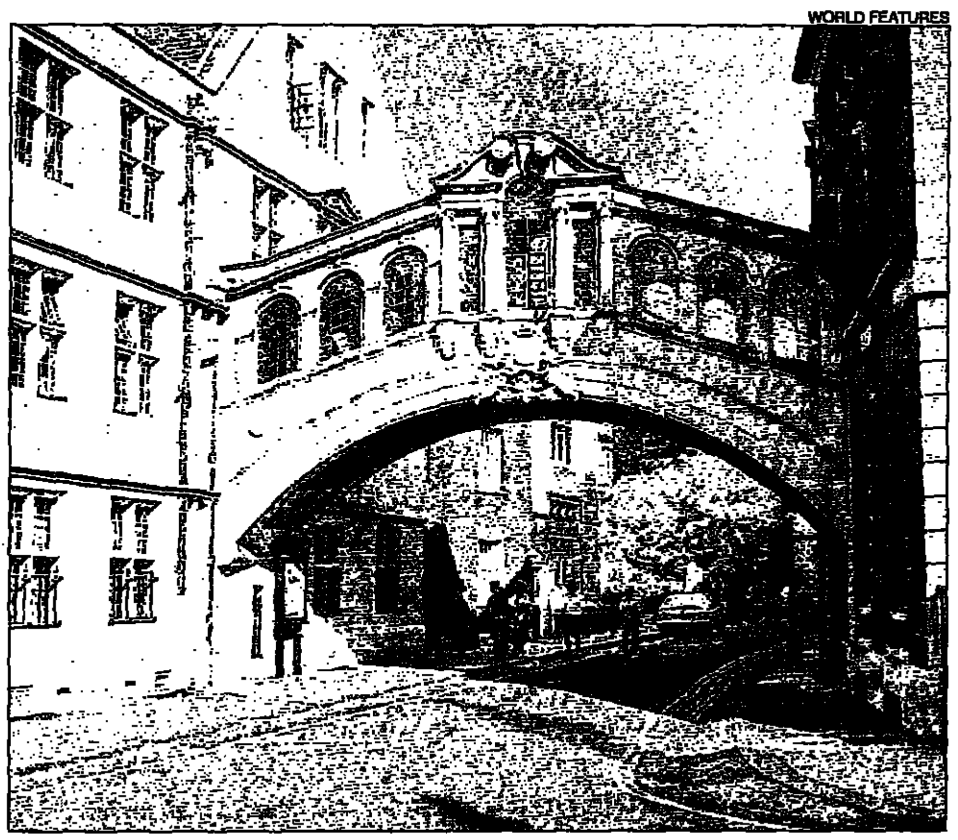
There should be much more emphasis in schools, particularly at primary level, on what the stories are really saying. There is more than one kind of truth and teachers should be helping the young to grasp that. Then, perhaps, among teenagers and adults there will be fewer dismissive cynics who, having discarded the "childishness" of religion like a rite of passage are left unable to think or reason at any level beyond the most mundane and literal.

Pretty nativity plays and nice carol services have their place in the Christmas curriculum, but it is important that our children are equipped with the basis for mature thinking on matters of spirituality and religion. Far more so than that adults should luxuriate in an annual nostalgic wallow at little ones warbling away in cardboard crowns.

Paul Flather explains Oxford's role in the promotion of Europe through a network of leading universities

The club with an eye on the Continent

WORLD FEATURES



Oxford University is to host next week's meeting of the heads of the Europaeum initiative

Next Monday, the heads of five leading European universities will meet in Oxford to mark five years since the conception of a special network aimed not only at promoting scholarly links but at educating a new generation of genuinely pan-European leaders.

In its first stage, the "Europaeum" has involved exchanges of staff and students and a range of high-level conferences and colloquia. The rectors of the universities of Bologna, Bonn, Leiden, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford and the director of the Graduate Institute of International Relations, in Geneva, will decide how to move the initiative on.

The original aim was to "contribute significantly to the evolution of a modern and peaceful Europe". Ultimately, it is hoped that this will mean the development of an international "university without walls", linking scholars by computer and satellite.

In the short term, however, the group will be seeking a French member, as well as developing joint postgraduate programmes, extending the mobility of students and establishing visiting professorships. Next year's programme of seminars, lectures and summer schools will include a highly topical conference in Geneva on limits to the "idea of Europe".

The creation of the Europaeum reflects a desire on the part of Oxford and the other partners to investigate the very basis of what is meant by Europe, learning as much by continuous, active collaboration as by the traditional methods of academic scrutiny and investigation.

At Oxford, the ideal has seen the emergence of a vigorous new Institute of European Studies, with a social science centre headed by Professor Jack Hayward and a law centre under the direction of Professor Basil Markensis. The university has always enjoyed strong links with the Continent. Indeed, history suggests that it was a band of exiled French monks who played a role in the university's foundation. But there is little doubt that the Europaeum, as it evolves, will greatly strengthen these ties.

As Dr Peter North, Oxford's Vice-Chancellor, who chairs the International Europaeum Committee, says: "We hope that the Europaeum will encourage graduates from all our institutions to develop a wide European outlook — and hopefully equip them to fill positions of the highest authority in the new Europe."

In May, Bonn hosted a day of events, including a round table on European affairs featuring both Lord Jenkins, Chancellor of Oxford, and Richard von Weisacker, a former President of Germany. Bonn also played host to a conference on the enlargement of the European Union, and Bologna put on a summer school for students and academics in law and the social sciences.

Initial fundraising by two of the founding fathers of the project, Lord Weidenfeld and Sir Ronald Grierson, a former head of GEC, made it possible for Oxford to launch the Europaeum. Fresh benefactions over the years have funded new posts and scholarships, for example bringing George Steiner to Oxford as a visiting professor last year.

The UK often has a bad press in Europe. But whatever its politicians are up to, it seems very clear that much depends on initiatives such as this.

The Europaeum is not an exclusive club: representatives from many other institutions participate in its projects. But it is an initiative that seeks to go beyond merely formal ties, a reflection of a kinder, integrative new Europe.

The author is head of external relations at Oxford University.

Industry rises to the Heseltine challenge

Are British firms setting themselves high enough training standards?

Michael Hatfield looks at sectors putting their targets to the test

Setting national training targets is one thing: getting companies to participate more positively by upgrading a skilled workforce is a different matter. That is why an initiative is to be launched next week to improve the awareness of training in industry.

Taking up the challenge made by Michael Heseltine when he was President of the Board of Trade, the National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (Nacett) is expected to announce that ten industrial sectors are to carry out a year-long assessment of management and skill levels.

The Government will give funding of £500,000, matching the money spent by industry pound for pound. The sectors to receive the award are believed to include Bus and Coach Training Ltd, the Chemical Industries Association, CAPITB Trust (the clothing industry organisation), the Engineering Training Authority, the Motor Industry Training Standards Council and the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB).

Behind the initiative lies an awareness by both the Government and those involved in promoting training that setting national targets is not in itself going to raise skill levels.

The problem has to be met head-on from a more narrowly focused base. Sectors that have been chosen will have to research and provide information not only about where they now stand in skills training but what targets they expect to achieve by the end of the century.

The challenge is an acknowledgement of the fact that the concept of benchmarking — in which companies with high standards encourage others to copy them — is not sufficient to meet the national targets, which were revised upwards this year.

Benchmarking sets standards in products and new technologies but has much less to do with the skills of the workforce and what future skills will be needed. And it is increased skills that will be needed to drive the new technologies.

It is hoped that the challenge will encourage employers to set and achieve higher targets. The Engineering Training Authority, for example, sees the funding as "a useful carrot" to carry out an immediate research programme.

The construction industry, which is still struggling to climb out of recession, has in recent years maintained its training levels, but there are marked differences in attitudes. Of the 70,000 firms registered with the CITB only 20 per cent have effective training schemes.

Bill Yates, of the CITB, said the Government money would help the industry to plan its future training needs for the time when the economy improved.

The construction industry, which represents 6 per cent of the national workforce, and provides 10 per cent of GDP, trains 10,000 young people each year — though nearly a half of them never complete the courses. It recognises that a skills shortage could hold back the hoped-for recovery when it occurs. Lack of skills, says Mr Yates, could force up labour costs.

It is not labour costs that Nacett has mostly in mind. One of the driving forces behind the challenge is demonstrating that training will aid individual companies in increasing their competitiveness, both domestically and internationally.

The ten sectors chosen — out of 30 which wanted to take up the challenge — will look at the present state of their sector, assess skills gaps and training needs, assess such issues as European global trends, and set targets for their sector.

It is estimated that these targets will affect as many as one in five people in the United Kingdom workforce by the end of next year.

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■ VISUAL ART

Wolverhampton is about to 'enhance its cultural identity', as the city prepares to be flooded by artistic lighting

■ THEATRE

Ralph Steadman makes his first foray into theatre design, with sets and costumes for *Gulliver's Travels*

THE TIMES ARTS

■ MUSIC

The London Musici celebrates the life of John Smith with a world premiere dedicated to the late Labour leader

■ TOMORROW

Experience a Conan Doyle conundrum: the tale of Sherlock Holmes and the Clocktower Mystery

Wolves ready to play a blinder

Deep in the Black Country, new light is to be shed on an eager town, says **Guy Walters**

A computer-generated view of how Wolverhampton Art Gallery will look once artist Martin Richman's bright ideas have been put into effect

The good burghers of Wolverhampton have agreed to be visited by the spectre of Public Art. In a three-year project called Out of Darkness, many of the town's key buildings are to be illuminated by the most ingenious lighting. The project will cost about £900,000, and will draw on the talents of top international lighting artists.

Those who believe that the money should be spent on hospitals should note that only 5 per cent of the funding has come from the local council. The European Regional Development Fund has given £207,000 and, while about £120,000 has come from various trusts, companies and foundations, the major donor was the National Lottery, which gave £500,000.

Out of Darkness is imaginative and exciting. The council and the Public Art Commissions Agency are making sure that the public has been consulted before the first building is lit up next summer. Not for Wolverhampton the compulsory artistic injection some other towns have suffered.

Take the case of the School Street carpark. The building is a 1960s monster; a series of carbuncular trays that dominates the southwestern point of the town centre. Residential high-rise buildings stand on the other side of the adjacent ring road, and their inhabitants will be directly affected by the project. The artist selected to light the building is Tony Cooper, who plans to make it glow with red and blue light, creating the impression of a three-dimensional drawing viewed without the special spectacles. The high-rise residents were asked if they objected; they didn't. Indeed, many were glad the eyesore was being transformed.

Geoffrey Wood, once a sculptor and now deputy director of PACA, admits that "it is difficult to achieve a thorough process of consultation". Indeed, most of the proposals for Out of Darkness are not yet in an exhibitable form, but they are being worked on. "We know mistakes have been made before," Wood says, "but here we are going to maintain a dialogue even after installation. I feel that it is all part of the generative process."

Because much of Out of Darkness consists of lighting, very little of Wolverhampton's actual fabric will be altered. Instead, it is the appearance of that fabric which will change, albeit only at night. The exhibition is not an imposition, but more a means of making the inhabitants rejoice in their environment. "We are trying to encourage the notion of a 'beacon town'," Wood says. "When people drive through they will notice that Wolverhampton is a little bit different." Is "beacon town" an established term? "No, I just made it up," he says.

Plans for the Wolverhampton Art Gallery are perhaps the most dramatic. Martin Richman's designs will have the building lit in yellow, and the windows will emanate a changing hue, from pink to violet, when people walk by. Around the base of the building there is a natural moat, which will be lit by a river of light that will emulate the flow of water.

One of the artists involved is Peter Fink, who is lighting the Chubb Building, a sizeable Victorian factory near the ring road. It has recently been converted into a multiplex of restaurants, bars and a cinema. Fink's plan is to install a lighthouse beam in the tower, which will intermittently flash across the landscape.

Then, on the floor of the building, he intends to embed a series of diodes that light up behind a pedestrian. When the pedestrian stops, the lights will surround him.

Fink is also a champion of public consultation. For his vast *Steel Wave* in Newport, he consulted 6,000 people in factories and schools.

"I always speak to the inhabitants who are affected, and ask them what sort of image that they want to project," he says. "A lot of artists are incapable of recognising that compromise is another tool in the box. After all, the environment of a gallery causes compromise."

Big ideas shrink in move from page to stage

Gulliver's Travels
Theatr Clwyd

IT SOUNDS terrific: Ralph Steadman designing *Gulliver's Travels*. Indeed, in Theatr Clwyd's foyer exhibition, Steadman's spattery, vehemently imaginative costume sketches convey the savage comedy of Swift's satire. Lilliput's small-minded law enforcers are morbid fishmen in narrow Victorian suits with soaring top hats and half their bones showing through their tailcoats. A Lilliputian baby is a Bosch horror in a perambulator: *just a pink face and matching posterior in the shape of* a vintage klaxon, jammed into a pram that resembles the skeleton of a piscine monster.

Unfortunately, big problems materialise in the translation from page to stage in this children's show directed by Roger Redfarn. The Lilliputians' exposed ribs are stencilled on fabric and sewn flappingly on to their garments — hardly gruesome.

Steadman, working for theatre for the first time, might have thought more practically, but the realisers of his designs (Stephen Snell and Jack Tripp) do not fully take up the challenge. The Bosch baby becomes just a 2-D cut-out.

More fundamentally, the crucial dilemma of how to present actors as giants and homunculi is only messily solved. Had you not read the book, you would surely be confused by the gigantic stripy foot that metonymically stands for the great big Gulliver, especially when Jack Klaff, the life-size Gulliver in black brogues, is popping out of the toes like Mother Hubbard. This is then chucked in for scrappy video projection of Klaff.

In Brobdingnag, Klaff wakes in a huge teaspoon, but the massive girl Glumdalclitch is an actress fitted with 4ft specs and a stomacher shaped as a nose. Her overgrown parents are seen as 6ft hands. These foam-sculpted characters are stylishly surreal, but with heads poking out of the parents' palms, Glumdalclitch's species suggest human beings not so much magnified as anatomically scrambled. Still, many touches are a hoot: the gross Brobdingnag baby on stilts; a High Court judge with a motorised cat for a wig.

Humphrey Carpenter's simplifying and modernising adaptation of Swift's story weakens its thrust. The contemporary frame seems gimmicky, with Gulliver as a GP not sparing the time to tell his daughter a bedtime story, then getting sucked into his computer's virtual reality to learn his lesson. En route, Carpenter shows us the dreadful perils of data-devotion in Laputa, now laptop computer land.

The Houyhnhnms have some bite as well. This super-race, equine-headed actors dragging bestial rear shanks, keep the Yahoo herd of penguin-suited nobs with red-nosed gallows-hoods for faces penned behind a fence of bones. Klaff, though flat elsewhere, is poignant for a flash when a Houyhnhnm reduces him to begging like a dog.

KATE BASSETT

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CLASSICAL CONCERTS: Tribute to John Smith; a (bad) taste of the Americas

Lieder of the opposition

London Musici/ Stephenson
St John's, Smith Square

SINCE they were appointed house orchestra for Rambert Dance Company in April 1994, London Musici have been devising an enterprising series of concerts of music, song and dance, often commissioning new composition in music and choreography.

The last event of the present series also mourned the loss and celebrated the life of John Smith. His widow, family and a good number of the Labour Party faithful came to St John's, Smith Square to hear two world premieres, one specifically dedicated to the late leader's memory, the other a noble envoi.

The latter, Julian Anderson's *Three Parts off the Ground*, was the evening's focus. Yet another contribution to the Purcell tercentenary celebrations, its three movements shift from straight arrangement, through paraphrase, to the "ambiguous set of models" (to quote the composer), which reflect and refract Purcellian techniques in a slow and haunting pattern of *Pavans*.

It is in these stately dances of the third piece that Sara Matthews's choreography comes into its own. She answers their irregular, pulsing rhythms — now static and iconic; now free flowing — with the swooping, hieratic movement of an imagined triptych of angels.

Michael the victorious, Gabriel the governor and Raphael the healer were incarnated in the bodies of Rambert's Rafael Bonachela, Kate Coyne and Steven Brett to a score whose subtlety of rhythm and orchestration will doubtless one day be heard to better advantage unamplified, and in a more sympathetic space than the gallery of St John's.

Subtlety was clearly neither the aim nor the achievement of Keith Burstein's *A Live Flame, In Memoriam John Smith MP*. In a broad amalgam of Elgar at his most rhetorical and Carl Davis at his most lyrical, Burstein sets extracts from the poetry of Louis MacNiece, Robert Graves, Keats, Burns and Gerard Manley Hopkins (Smith's beloved *Inversnaid*), with scant regard for the variety and vigour of their individual voices. Apart from a pause for a tolling bell and a shudder of tremolando, the voice of the tenor Richard Coxon floats its almost continuous oratory, with a facility bordering on the facile, over virtually unchanging textures and tempos.

If this was something of a missed opportunity, then Peter Maxwell Davies provided a fine valediction. His *An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise* once again worked its magic, as the blurred memories of party and procession, lament and laughter mingle and find their apotheosis in an exuberant, bag-piping dawn.

HILARY FINCH

Up the Amazon without a paddle

BBC SO/ Diemecke
Festival Hall

THE season for banality on the concert platform opened early this year — last week in the Festival Hall, to be exact. Too much good taste can be boring, but it was badly needed in the BBC Symphony Orchestra's programme of music from the Americas.

The evening began with a piece that, the programme note enthused, has "sometimes been called Mexico's unofficial national anthem", José Pablo Moncayo's *Huapango*.

It takes its name from the most popular of Mexico's folk-dances, and while the original style is something a tourist might be excited to discover being played in a back-street Acapulco bar, Moncayo's piece sounded overblown on the South Bank.

Apart from a reliance on strummed violin accompaniments to muted trumpet tunes, the orchestration suggested that Moncayo (1912-58) had a good ear for colour, even if it appears that in harmony lessons he did not progress far beyond the tonic-dominant relationship.

Perhaps the work's cause was not helped by the conducting of Enrique Diemecke, who concentrated on proving affinity with his compatriot's music by flicking his hips. His show-off podium manner would have made Bernstein look a model of sobriety.

Bernstein himself was represented by *The Age of Anxiety*, his second symphony that is part piano concerto. James Tocco was a good soloist, equally efficient in the passages of elegiac introspection and jazzy outbursts. Diemecke milked the Mahlerian finale for all it was worth, but the work needed a performance of more consistent fervour to succeed.

Even with stiff competition from *Huapango*, the worst piece of the evening was Villa-Lobos's suite *Floresta do Amazonas*. Nothing of the Brazilian composer's genius shone through here, for the music is Hollywood hootchy-kootch, based on the score he wrote in 1958 for the movie *Green Mansions*.

Vast orchestral forces are required for the evocations of birdsong, rushing wind, fire, animal cries and jungle drums, and the piece also calls for male choir (drawn from the BBC Symphony Chorus) and soprano soloist. The Mexican Maria Luisa Tamez, possessed of a big, vibrant voice, gave a heartfelt performance.

The BBCSO played with dedicated professionalism, but must have been wondering who chose the programme. Or, in the words of the opening chorus, "!?Whyééééé?!".

JOHN ALLISON

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■ POP 1

Forgetting the 1960s: why we are not queueing to buy the latest rarities from Herman's Hermits

■ POP 2

American guitarist Joe Satriani is hardly a household name, but his new album is a work of lean magnificence

THE TIMES ARTS

■ POP 3

Take away the obscenities on the latest release by the Outhere Brothers and there isn't much left

■ POP 4

What is the music industry going to do when Blur and the other Britpop bands burn out, or fade away?

For every immortal Beatles there were a thousand 1960s acts doomed to has-been limbo. **Alan Jackson** calls the roll

Remember when they were fab?

PICTORIAL

Cheeky chappie Herman (Peter Noone) presents his blushing Hermits to the public. For a while, the world was deeply impressed

Why is the music industry attempting to whip us up into a frenzy once again over John, Paul, George and Ringo instead of over Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich? Why is it that the Animals are still revered, but not the Applejacks? That the current generation of hitmakers pay homage to the Small Faces and Springfield and not to The Tremeloes or — Morrissey excepted — Twinkle? The answer is a cheering one for those who feel that pop is a game in which the talent-free but lucky all too often end up as winners. A look back at those 1960s artists who, like the Beatles, have achieved iconic status proves that almost anyone can have a hit, but only the gifted achieve a place in history.

Which is why we are not queueing to buy rarities and previously unreleased material by Herman's Hermits, one of the pop world's first manufactured groups. A collection of five northwestern wannabes, they were fronted by a former *Coronation Street* bit player so determinedly cute he made Paul McCartney look surly by comparison. Peter Noone had the sort of teeth'n'fringe combination latterly associated with a Muppet and, like Tommy Steele before him and David Essex after, seemed to have an unswerving, unnerving belief in the potency of his own charm. And how tirelessly he deployed it.

A television documentary on the band, due for broadcast next year, shows the now 48-year-old to have been far and away the most saccharine element in the 1960s' famous British invasion of the US charts. His music hall-style performances on novelty chart-toppers such as *Mrs Brown, You've Got a Lovely Daughter* or *I'm Henry VIII, I Am*, owed more to George Formby than George Michael, yet they charmed an America briefly in love with all that Swinging England could throw at it. John Lennon claimed famously that the Beatles were bigger than God. In the America of 1965, Herman's Hermits were more famous than the Beatles.

> ❝ Perhaps we have not only the face but also the career we deserve ❞

It was a fleeting success story, though — 12 million records sold there that year, then a rapid descent into cabaret territory and, eventually, replacement in the public's affection by another fabricated band, the Monkees. "I'd much rather have been in the Animals or the Who," says bassist Carl Green in the documentary, the latest in producer Len Brown's excellent occasional series, *My Generation*. "But it was not to be — you take what you're given."

All the band members seem anxious now to assure us they were not as annoyingly squeaky-clean as their publicists of the time had us believe. "I remember us wrecking a hotel room in Flint, Michigan, during Keith Moon's 21st birthday party," says one almost wistfully.

The programme implies that it was Noone's personal ambition which led to the break-up of the group. If so, it is hardly the only time that inner conflicts have hastened the end of a multi-million dollar success story. Brown's earlier investigations into the histories of the Yardbirds and the Animals unearthed similar tensions — the former's frequently changing line-up, brought on by "musical differences", and the wary relationship between the latter's Eric Burdon and Alan Price.

As in all walks of life, some individuals age better than others. Burdon, now 54, may be less high-profile and, one assumes, poorer than the still-visible Price, but their respective contributions to *My Generation* left the impression that he was still the more relaxed and philosophical of the two. These days a blond and pony-tailed biker, living on the fringes of the Californian desert and making music for pleasure with his I-Band, he acknowledged just one regret: "Try bringing up a kid when you're known for singing 'It's my life and I'll do what I want'." Was he bitter after that much-fanned rift caused by Price's ownership of the publishing rights to the Animals' hit *House of the Rising Sun*? "Nah," Burdon drawled. "Bitter-sweet."

What about the aforementioned Twinkle, christened Lynn Ripley and famous for 15 minutes back in 1964 as the singer of *Terry*, Britain's answer to the bike-crash horror of the Shangri-Las *Leader of the Pack*? The Smiths may have covered her one follow-up hit *Golden Lights*, but is she still sanguine about the fact that such peers as Cilla and Lulu remain in the public eye while she has been all but forgotten? When tracked down by the rock monthly *Q* recently, she seemed to be. A male model husband ("He's just done the new Milk Tray ad"), two teenage children and a self-admittedly lazy attitude meant that she never really got things together. "But now I want to get into a position where people know I exist, so I can write songs for other people," she said.

The Hermits have long since gone their various ways: rhythm guitarist Keith Hopwood is now a music publisher, Green runs a tiling business and drummer Barry Whitwam tours still under the old band name. Sadly, guitarist Lek Leckenby died last year. But Noone, still chubby-cheeked and boyish-looking, has maintained a showbiz name of sorts in America. The hoped-for solo career barely got off the ground (just one British hit, with a cover of Bowie's *Oh, You Pretty Things*) and, although he still performs, in America, his main claim to current fame is as a video-jock on VH-1, the babyboomer's answer to MTV.

Perhaps it is true that by middle-age we — and the current crop of rockers, rappers and rebels — will all have not only the face but also the career we deserve. Already it can be seen to be true of 1970s and 1980s names, with Adam Ant, Toyah, Gary Kemp and Kim Wilde seeking thesp-stardom as an antidote to their diminishing status as pop stars. So, 30 years from now, will the Gallagher brothers and Damon Albarn be (a) treading the boards in West End musicals; (b) hosting game shows; (c) largely forgotten; or (d) the subjects of expensive retrospective promotional campaigns by greedy record companies? Time alone will tell.

CABARET

Join the party

IT'S Christmas party time in the Green Room of the Café Royal, to which an unusually successful pairing of entertainers is attracting audiences boisterous even by the standards of this convivial nightspot. When the customers are determined to have a good time, singing along even before invited to do so, experienced performers simply take the energy and beam it back.

On Tuesday, the first night of Mike Berry and Lyn Paul's three-week season, Berry rode such a wave of enthusiasm and turned in a storming, ten-song set. It may have held few surprises, but it was crowd-pleasing and put over with absolute professionalism.

The musical scene was set firmly at the end of the 1950s and early 1960s. Like Bobby Vee in America, Berry first found fame as a Buddy Holly soundalike, and his hits, *Don't You Think It's Time?* and *A Tribute to Buddy Holly*, sat easily alongside *La Bamba*, *Oh Boy!*, *It Doesn't Matter Any More*, *That'll Be the Day* and *All Shook Up*. During *Only the Lonely*, audience participation reached a raucous height, but Berry calmed things with a *Mack the Knife* closely modelled on Bobby Darin's cool version. His whip-thin figure topped with a very 1960s, very healthy head of hair, Berry left the crowd eager for more after they had joined in his final number, *Walk Right Back*.

Lyn Paul/
Mike Berry
Café Royal

The seamlessly proficient four-piece band barely broke its stride before the one-time New Seeker, Lyn Paul, took the stage, swinging directly into *You Won't Find Another Fool Like Me* — yet another irresistible singalong song. Fewer of the crowd joined her for *Crazy* and *Crying*, but the table-singers were very pleased to contribute to *Stand By Your Man* and *I Will Survive* (rather an odd coupling, if you stop to think). Paul's voice is warm and strong, and her sassy approach and glitzy style (spangly dress slit to the thigh) found its perfect outlet in *New York, New York*. She closed with two Neil Sedaka songs: *Love will Keep Us Together* and *Solitaire*: again, hardly adventurous, but it was exactly what the audience wanted.

Both singers probably don't care whether they can revisit the charts, but as long as cabaret audiences appreciate no-frills entertainment and professionalism, neither will be idle for long.

TONY PATRICK

NEW RELEASES: **David Sinclair** sorts the Satrianis from the scatologists

Joe strips to his string best

Axe master: Satriani's guitar work is lean and lovely

JOE SATRIANI
Joe Satriani
(Relativity/Sony)

THERE is an ingrained suspicion of technical excellence among rock's chattering classes, and although the virtuoso American guitarist Joe Satriani is popular enough to headline his own show at Wembley Arena tomorrow, he is hardly a household name.

But if Satriani has been accused in the past of flaunting his fret-melting technique for its own sake, the charge simply won't stick as far as his self-titled seventh album is concerned. With its taut arrangements, moody atmosphere and stripped-down production, courtesy of Glyn Johns, this is a work of lean, unfussy magnificence.

Apart from a loopy, gut-bucket-blues shuffle called *Look My Way*, which Satriani favours with a fervently down-and-dirty vocal, the album is entirely instrumental. Tracks such as *S.M.F.* and *If*, where Satriani's playing combines the gritty southern drawl of ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons with the mercurial fire of Jeff Beck, are struck from a blues template. But other pieces, notably the sinister *Cool #9* and the breakneck *Killer Bee Bop*, explore the rockier shores of funk and jazz with sure-footed brilliance.

There are astounding contributions throughout from drummer Manu Katche, best known for his work with Peter Gabriel, and reliable support from bassist Nathan East and rhythm guitarist Andy Fairweather Low, both of Eric Clapton's band. But it is Satriani who has fashioned the bones of this masterpiece. All he needs now is some decent song titles.

ACE OF BASE
The Bridge
(London 529 655)

THEY may have sold 19 million copies of their debut album, *Happy Nation*, but the Swedish boy-girl quartet is still a long way from justifying the "new Abba" tag. Unfortunately, *The Bridge* is not going to help much.

Although the new album is streets ahead of the debut in its musical themes and production values, they have tried to reposition themselves too quickly in the pure pop market, a notoriously fickle place at the best of times.

The result is a surfeit of slow, reflective ballads such as *Raving*, *Angel Eyes* and *Edge of Heaven*, some spiced with a hint of a reggae rhythm, and sundry other songs which strive too hard for an "adult" feel. Although infinitely preferable to the pneumatic dancefloor beat of *Beautiful Life*, they all lack the knockout choruses and bright, unselfconscious fizz of Ace Of Base's biggest hits.

THE OUTHERE BROTHERS
Party Album
(Eternal/WEA 0630-12781)

THE routine practice of harnessing the "clean" versions of songs that get played on the radio to a variety of profane remixes on the singles and albums sold in the shops has become an issue this year. In some cases, the cleaned-up versions only exist as specially pressed promo copies distributed to the media but unavailable to the public.

However, in the particularly vexatious case of the Outhere Brothers, the chart-topping Chicago-based duo whose spectacularly inane chants are unlikely to appeal to listeners over the age of 12, the record company concerned has quietly bowed to pressure and replaced their already successful album, *1 Polish 2 Biscuits & A Fish Sandwich*, with a new, drastically toned-down version. Retitled *Party Album* and shorn of a full 15 minutes of scatological delights, the album has acquired a more domesticated air, like a newly neutered tomcat.

As devotees of the hits *Don't Stop (Wiggle Wiggle)*, *Boom Boom Boom* and *La La La Hey Hey* will doubtless be aware, words are not one of the Brothers' strong points (or tunes, for that matter). Frankly, without the obscenities there isn't a great deal left.

TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS
Playback
(MCA D6-11375; six discs)

THE traditional boxed-set season has produced slim pickings this year, but here's one worth bringing to Santa's attention. Chronicling the career of Tom Petty since he emerged like some pale rider from the American New Wave of the late 1970s, through to his induction into rock'n'roll's old boys' club nearly two decades later, *Playback* is an impressive testament to a hardworking talent.

The first three discs provide a trawl through the best of Petty's 11 albums up to and including the *Greatest Hits* collection of 1993, the fourth is a collection of B-sides, and the last two discs comprise previously unreleased material, including early demos and live recordings of predictably variable quality.

There is plenty here to appeal to Petty novices and completists alike.

TOP TEN ALBUMS

1	Robson & Jerome	Robson & Jerome (RCA)
2	(What's the Story) Morning Glory?	Oasis (Creation)
3	Made in Heaven	Queen (Parlophone)
4	The Memory of Trees	Enya (WEA)
5	Anthology 1	Beatles (Apple)
6	Love Songs	Elton John (Rocket)
7	Something to Remember	Madonna (Maverick)
8	Life	Simply Red (East West)
9	Different Class	Pulp (Island)
10	HIStory	Michael Jackson (Epic)

Copyright CIN

After Oasis, the desert

Unless the music business pulls its finger out, we'll have nothing to look forward to once Britpop dies

CAITLIN MORAN

"Eeeeeee! Eeeeeee! Eeeeeee!" No, it's not the lyrics to the new Shamen LP; it's the audience reaction to Pulp walking on stage at this year's *Smash Hits* Poll Winners Party. Pulp, who, two years ago, would not have got screamed at if they had walked into the changing rooms at Tammy Girl holding cameras.

Their partners in bemusement tonight are Oasis, Blur, Elastica, Menswear and Radiohead; the Britpop bandwagon has swept them into *Smash Hits* territory, and into an audience which, on seeing Noel Gallagher's knowing wink (as he filches Gary Glitter, T. Rex and the Beatles), Jarvis's wink (as Pulp's *Disco 2000* announces, they're on very intimate terms with Gloria) and Damon's wink (as he thinks of all those Wire records in his bedroom), catches the wink and winks back furiously, thinking it's a come-on.

Britpop has stormed home in nearly every single category that *Smash Hits* has because, for the first time in these young fans' lives, their heroes walk the same streets and read the same magazines as they do. History is happening here and now to them, rather than in some other country that sends over its stars when they're bored with them. Think of New Kids on the Block, Vanilla Ice, Color Me Badd, Roxette, Kylie and Jason, 2 Unlimited — this is the *Smash Hits* audience's immediate and only past. The girls here are screaming in a celebration of being young, and living in the hope that, one day, they might bump into Damon in the Hendon branch of Asda.

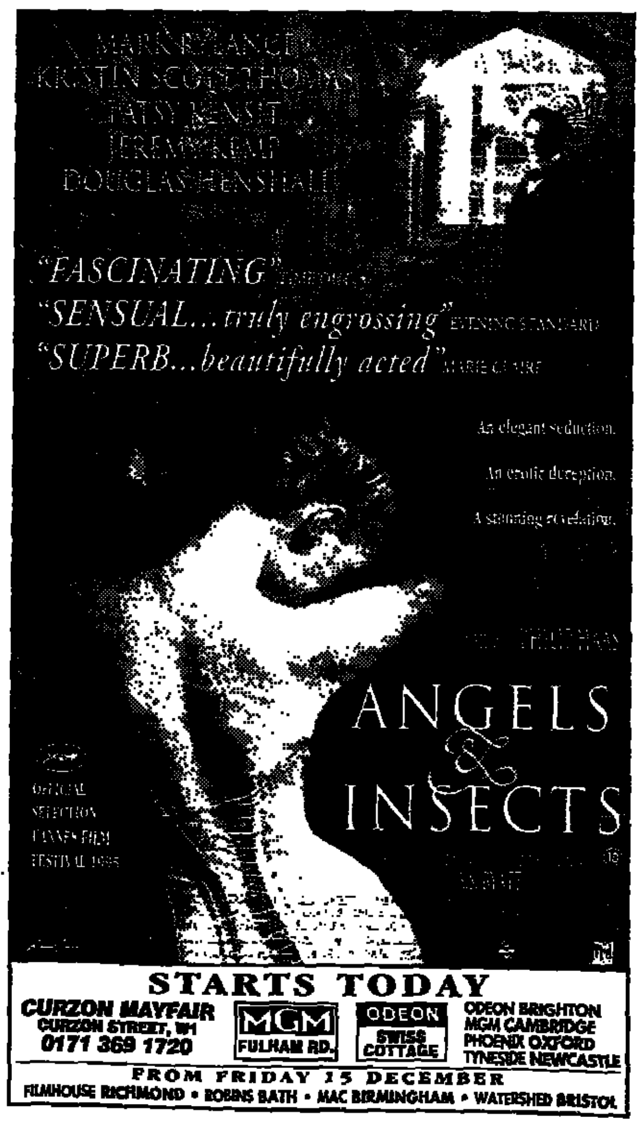
The record industry loves them for slightly different reasons. Britain's third largest money-spinner is its music, and Britpop has come along at a handy time for the economy. All the press hoopla surrounding Britpop has saved record companies a fortune in advertising, and some bigwig in a suit will probably be knighted at the tail-end of 1996 for services to British commerce.

Britpop has also been a comfort for Britain as a whole because, let's face it, music is the only thing Britain is any good at. We get whipped at cricket, tennis, rugby, football, chess, sit-coms, movies, coffee, pizza, public transport, any kind of liberal progressions and the weather. The one bit of the Hubble telescope we were allowed to build broke. Thank God for Oasis, or Britain would probably be on an international parity with Tristan da Cunha by now.

But the celebration onstage and in the audience at the *Smash Hits* awards turns into complacency behind the scenes. By chasing only the new Oasis, Blur and Pulp, A&R people are forgetting the diversity which made music Britain's third largest industry. They are revelling in the fact that it was so easy to break bands such as Oasis because the Gallaghers' influences are the cosy icons of old, and won't be too much of a shock to the system to the 30-plus audience that still makes up the bulk of the record-buying public. The mood foolishly seems to be that Britpop is a gravy train that can be ridden for the next five years.

What's being forgotten, of course, is that the mainstream is a predatory force, always looking for new influences. No trend lasts for more than a year. And so, for the more forward-thinking, the well-nigh hysterical championing of Britpop is the championing of something we know will be superseded by something ever greater.

Britpop is a brilliant and much-needed publicising of British talent, but it should not be used as a lazy mental prop, doing nothing more than harking back to a time when Britain truly was greater. Britpop should be expanded to include all British pop — Black Grape, Portishead, St Etienne, Dubstar, P.J. Harvey, the Prodigy, Goldie and Tricky. As it is now, Britpop's fate is tied to that of four or five bands — and when they go down, as they will, Britpop's campaigning spirit will go with it. And Britain will go back to being a island, glowing faintly from other people's radioactive waste, and still more influenced by its dead than its living.



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■ CHOICE 1

Tom Stoppard's first big hit is revived by the National

VENUE: Tonight at the Lyttelton Theatre

■ CHOICE 2

A world premiere for the Royal Ballet from America's Twyla Tharp

VENUE: Tomorrow at Covent Garden

THE TIMES ARTS

■ CHOICE 3

Kent Nagano and the Hallé give Manchester a new musical work

VENUE: Sunday at the Free Trade Hall

■ OPERA

A rare and enjoyable staging, courtesy of Flanders Opera, for Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*

WEEKEND CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marit Hargle

LONDON

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD: First night of previews for Adrian Scarborough and Simon Russell Beale, playing Stoppard's attendant lords in Matthew Francis's directional debut here
National (Lyttelton), South Bank, SE1 (0171-928 2252) Tonight-Dec 13, 7.30pm; opens Dec 14, 7pm. In rep ♿

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM: Sir Colin Davis conducts a concert performance of Britten's masterly operatic adaptation of Shakespeare. Brian Asawa sings the role of Oberon with Elizabeth Futral as Tytania.
Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-638 8891) Sun, 3pm ♿

NEW YORK MEETS VIENNA: An evening of music and song drawing together the works of Cole Porter, George Gershwin and the light-hearted operettas of Johann Strauss. Franz Welser-Möst conducts the London Philharmonic, accompanied by the baritone Thomas Hampson.
Festival Hall, South Bank, SE1 (0171-960 4242) Sun, 6pm. ♿

▨ **THE TOWER:** Alexandre Dumas' romantic melodrama, with Sinead Cusack as a scheming Queen Marguerite, and Adrian Dunbar as the agent of her downfall
Almeida, Almeida Street, N1 (0171-359 4404) Previews from tonight, 7.30pm. Opens Dec 12, 7pm ♿

MR WORLDLY WISE: Twyla Tharp's work for the Royal Ballet receives its world premiere. It is her first ever three-act ballet, set to music by Rossini and with principal roles created for Irek Mukhamedov, Darcey Bussell and Tetsuya Kumakawa. David Roger is the multi-talented designer.
Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2 (0171-304 4000) Tomorrow, 7pm. Then Dec 15, 18 and 20, Jan 3 and 4, 7.30pm. ♿

ELSEWHERE

BIRMINGHAM: John Ratty, Badger and, of course, the irrepressible **Toad of Toad Hall** in A.A. Milne's version of *The Wind in the Willows*. Director Gwenda Hughes promises a spectacular set, technical wizardry and wonderful songs
Repertory, Broad Street (0121-236 4455) Opens tonight, 7.30pm; check box office for performance schedule

EDINBURGH: More family merriment with Stuart Paterson's **Merlin the Magnificent** — a tale of good versus evil and of the boy Arthur, hidden by the ageing wizard in a crazy Scottish castle.
Royal Lyceum, Grindlay Street, (0131-229 9697) Opens tonight, 7pm. Check box office for performance schedule. ♿

MANCHESTER: Story-telling and music are blended in **Colliding with Chris** (The Rhythmical Tale Of A Runaway Bike) — a world premiere of a new work by Nathaniel Stookey. Kent Nagano conducts the Hallé Orchestra. Patricia Routledge narrates the tale of the bike's dramatic progress as it accumulates an odd assortment of passengers
Free Trade Hall, Peter Street (0161-834 1712) Sun, 3pm. ♿

LONDON GALLERIES

British Museum: Westminster Kings and the Medieval Palace of Westminster (0171-636 1555) . **Hayward:** Art and Power: Europe under the dictators (071-928 3144) . **National Gallery:** Paintings from National Trust Houses (0171-747 2885) . **Royal Academy:** Africa: Art of a Continent; David Hockney (0171-439 7438) . . (0171-887 8000) . . **V & A:** Jain Art from India (0171-938 8500) . **Whitechapel:** Emil Nolde (0171-522 7888)

THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

■ House full, returns only
▨ Some seats available
☐ Seats at all prices

▨ **A CHRISTMAS CAROL:** Revival of *Ian Judge's popular but over-sweet* production. Clive Francis plays Scrooge
Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-638 8891) Mon-Sat, 7.15pm, mats Thurs and Sat; Dec 19 and Jan 2, 2pm ♿

☐ **HYSTERIA:** Henry Goodman plays Freud with Tim Potter as Salvador Dali, in Terry Johnson's surreal, double award-winner
Duke of Yorks, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-836 5122) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Thurs and Sat, 3pm ♿

▨ ***THE JUNGLE BOOK:*** *Tim Supple* directs his adaptation of three of Kipling's Mowgli stories for the Christmas season.
Young Vic, The Cut, SE1 (0171-928 6363). Ring box office for schedule ♿

▨ **MACK AND MABEL:** Jerry Herman's musical set in early Hollywood. Fine songs, though a troublesome book. Starring Howard McGillin and a delightful Caroline O'Connor
Piccadilly, Denman Street, W1 (0171-369 1734) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mats Wed and Sat, 3pm

▨ **MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN:** Diana Rigg in title role of Brecht's epic denunciation of war. Jonathan Kent directs a new version by David Hare.
National (Olivier), South Bank, SE1 (0171-928 2252). Tonight, 7.15pm, Sat, 2pm and 7.15pm, Mon-Tue, 7.15 ♿

▨ **RICHARD II:** Fiona Shaw plays the puppyish king. This daring piece of casting succeeds, as does the whole of Deborah Warner's production
National (Cottesloe), South Bank, SE1 (0171-928 2252). Tonight, tomorrow, 7pm ♿
EL2 1

▨ **THE SHAKESPEARE REVUE:** A witty evening of song, dance and sketches to do with William S. Assembled by Christopher Luscombe and Malcolm McKee.
Vaudeville, Strand, WC2 (0171-836 9987) Mon-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 8.30pm; mats Wed, 2.30pm and Sat, 5.30pm

☐ **SOUP:** One-man-show with a score of characters, mostly homeless, by Michael Mears, who wrote and performed the excellent *Tomorrow we Do The Sky*. Winner of an Edinburgh Fringe First.
Lyric Studio, King Street, Hammersmith W6 (0181-741 2311). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat Sat, 4.30pm

☐ **TAKING SIDES:** Enthralling drama by Ronald Harwood, based on the investigations of Furtwängler's alleged Nazi sympathies
Criterion, Piccadilly Circus, WC2 (0171-369 1747) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mats Wed and Sat, 2.30pm.

☐ **TREASURE ISLAND:** Roy Marsden and a largely fresh cast do the old yo-ho-ho. Phil Wilmot directs
Mermaid, Puddle Dock, EC4 (0171-236 2211). Tue-Sat, 7pm (Dec 12, 6.30pm). Mats most days. ♿

☐ **WHAT A SHOW!:** Musical spectacular revolving around Tommy Steele, who sings, dances, grins and remembers the old days.
Prince of Wales, Coventry Street, W1 (0171-8393 5987) Mon-Sat, 8pm; mats Wed, 3pm and Sat, 5pm

☐ **THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS:** Jeremy Sinden plays the ebullient Toad *in the now annual return of the* delightful National Theatre production.
Old Vic, Waterloo Rd, SE1 (0171-=928 6655). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mats Wed and Sat, 2.30pm; mats daily in week of Dec 26, 2.30pm ♿

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated with the symbol ◆) on release across the country

NEW RELEASES

◆ **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT** (15)
What happens when the widowed President gets a girlfriend? Not much, even with Michael Douglas and Annette Bening. Director, Rob Reiner
Empire ♿ (0171-437 1234) **MGM Fulham Road** (0171-370 2636) **Trocadero** ♿ (0171-434 0031) **Odeon Kensington** (01426 914666) **Screen/Baker Street** (0171-935 2772) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

ANGELS AND INSECTS (18): Procreative games in Victorian England. Handsome but stiff drama, with Mark Rylance, Patsy Kensit and Kristin Scott Thomas. Director, Philip Haas
Curzon Mayfair (0171-369 1720) **MGM Fulham Road** (0171-370 2636) **Odeon Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098)

THE BROTHERS McMULLEN (15) Irish-Americans agonise over love, commitment and beer. Modest feature debut by writer-director-actor Edward Burns
Gate ♿ (0171-727 4043) **Lumiere** (0171-836 0691) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121) **Screen/Green** (0171-226 3520)

UNSTRUNG HEROES (PG): Diane Keaton directs this eccentric heart-warmer about a boy's charmed life with crazy relatives. With Nathan Watt, Andie MacDowell, John Turturro
MGM Tottenham Court Road (0171-636 6148) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121) **Screen/Hill** ♿ (0171-435 3366)

DR. JEKYLL AND MS. HYDE (12): Brash and unfunny comic update of Stevenson's story, with Tim Daly and Sean Young. Director, David Price.
MGM Haymarket (0171-839 1527) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

CURRENT

ELISA (15): Overwrought French tale of a tearaway kid who seeks out her father. With Vanessa Paradis, Gérard Depardieu. Director, Jean Becker
MGMs: Piccadilly (0171-437 3561) **Swiss Centre** (0171-439 4470)

◆ **GOLDENEYE** (12): Pierce Brosnan twinkles as the new James Bond. A rip-roaring thriller with a sense of humour, with Sean Bean
Barbican ♿ (0171-638 8891) **Clapham Picture House** (0171-498 3323) **MGMs: Baker Street** (0171-935 9772) **Chelsea** (0171-352 5096) **Fulham Road** (0171-370 2636) **Notting Hill Coronet** ♿ (0171-727 6705) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Leicester Square** (01426 915683) **Marble Arch** (01426 914501) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER (15): Actors struggle to mount *Hamlet*. Overmanic comedy from Kenneth Branagh, with Michael Maloney, Joan Collins
Barbican ♿ (0171-638 8891) **MGMs: Chelsea** (0171-352 5096) **Tottenham Court Road** (0171-636 6148) **Odeons: Haymarket** (01426 915353) **Kensington** (01426 914666) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **Phoenix** (0181-883 2233) **Richmond** (0181-332 0030) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121)

◆ **MURDER IN THE FIRST** (15): Flashy but absorbing Alcatraz drama, with Kevin Bacon, Christian Slater and Gary Oldman. Director, Marc Rocco.
Clapham Picture House *(0171-498 3323)* **MGMs: Fulham Road** (0171-370 2636) **Haymarket** (0171-839 1527) **Odeon Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE (U): John Ford's wonderful 1946 western about Wyatt Earp, with Henry Fonda, Linda Darnell and Victor Mature.
Renoir (0171-837 8402)

◆ **THE SANTA CLAUSE** (U): Divorced dad becomes the new Santa. Broad family comedy with a human face, featuring Tim Allen.
MGM Chelsea (0171-352 5096) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **West End** (01426 915574) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

Fun and frolics with Korngold

OPERA

Die tote Stadt
Flanders Opera,
Antwerp

Marietta (Cynthia Makris), seen here with her admirers, is a 1920s flapper in this joyfully theatrical production

Opera in situ is all the rage — *Aida* has been staged by the Pyramids, *Tosca* filmed on location in Rome, Mozart's *Seraglio* turns up regularly in Topkapi, and this week we read on the letters page of *Turandot* in Peking. Now Flanders Opera is bringing Korngold's *Die tote Stadt* ever closer to home: Götz Friedrich's fine production, originally from Berlin, moves from Antwerp to Ghent, for performances up to Christmas.

Many have heard of Korngold's opera of 1920 but few in this country have seen it: next month's concert performance at the Queen Elizabeth Hall will be its British premiere. Based on Georges Rodenbach's symbolist novella *Bruges-la-morte*, it was originally planned as a one-acter, one of countless operatic god-children of Strauss's *Salome*.

Paul, the protagonist, mourns his dead wife Marie in a Bruges house turned into a temple of memory, including a lock of her hair in a glass case. In the first act a lookalike but frisky dancer, Marietta, appears (*doubling with Marie's* ghost, a peach of a role much relished by Jeritza) and, after much operatic agonising, including a night of love, Paul strangles the impostor with the hair. Shock! Horror! But the second and third acts were all a dream: in the final moments Marietta pops back to collect the umbrella she left behind in Act I. Paul is cured. There is an inescapable glibness about this that could be said to characterise the work as a whole.

On the one hand you have *the 23-year-old Korngold's* amazing facility: lush, Straussian orchestration, *faux-naïf* Mahlerian tunes, instinctive theatricality. On the other there are acres of padding to fill the narrative out — an *Ariadne*-style *commedia dell'arte* troupe who organise an impromptu street party and a religious procession that invades Paul's house. It's all fun in its way, but Korngold would have been far better advised to stick to his original one-act format.

As if in recognition of this, Friedrich *runs the first two* acts together, which involves a spectacular scene change: out flies Paul's solid-looking house with its authentic Bruges brickwork, in slides half the city, complete with canal, in clouds of dry ice. Stunning! The *commedia* arrive by gondola, which got a good laugh from the Flemish audience. The procession involved four Christs and countless flagellants. The unashamed theatricality of the staging matched that of the piece, and you have to admit that it worked — the *ending was undeniably* moving.

One reason for the work's comparative rarity is the strenuousness of the vocal writing. Paul and Marietta are at full stretch over a boiling orchestra virtually throughout, and you need an Elektra and a Siegfried. Flanders Opera fielded them near enough: Cynthia Makris has bags of stamina and very good legs (the action is updated and Marietta appears as a 1920s flapper), and William Cochran's tousled, shambling Paul was *powerfully* sung. The Flanders Opera Orchestra played robustly for Stefan Soltesz.

An evening as enjoyable as it was instructive, then, and Ghent is not that far away.

RODNEY MILNES

Talent wasted on the weakly weird

NEW MUSIC

Kronos Quartet
Festival Hall

New music, new haircuts, new clothes: the Kronos formula is easily mimicked and often mocked. But, as a fairly full Festival Hall showed once again on Tuesday, it seems to work. The pioneering American quartet and its imitators have clearly found an audience untapped and untouched by more conventional chamber recitals. And in the process, they have broadened the repertoire with an eclectic range of new works.

The trouble is that too many of those works, if stripped of their trendy trappings and played by four middle-aged men in suits, would be lucky to find an audience at all. The colourless piece by Julia Wolfe which opened this latest programme of four British premieres, all of them Kronos commissions, was a case in point. Combining nagging, fiercely rhythmic repetition with flourishes of empty decoration, it was called *Dig Deep* and could well have been written with a spade.

Ken Benshoof's unaffected *Song of Twenty Shadows* came as a welcome contrast. Written for the Kronos's viola player, Hank Dutt, in memory of his companion, it explores grief and consolation with a troubled lyricism reminiscent of such decidedly untrendy composers as Vaughan Williams, whose second quartet gives similar prominence to its dedicatee's viola. The work's impact was diminished, its emotions trivialised, by the moody accompanying light-show.

The most substantial music of the evening came in the quirky form of Five Selections from *John's Book of Alleged Dances*, by John Adams. Described by the composer as part of "a book of dances for which the steps have yet to be invented", these witty, metrically intricate miniatures are an engaging and idiosyncratic counterpoint to the grand structures and lush textures of Adams's big orchestral pieces. Alone among the works on the programme, they suggested that repeated listening might be rewarded.

Nobody, however, should have to listen more than once to Tan Dun's *Ghost Opera*, which occupied the whole second half of the programme. Scored for quartet, voices, pipa, percussion, and three large bowls of water, this was a theatrical jumble of surpassing silliness, accompanied by pretentious programme notes and a diagram.

Tan is endlessly inventive in his search for new sonorities — paper, pebbles and water are all pressed into use. The combination of string quartet and pipa (a sort of short-necked plucked lute, played by the virtuoso Wu Man) in music combining Bach with Chinese folksong, is potentially intriguing. But any musical interest was overshadowed by groaning and growling and prowling about that seemed borrowed from some 1960s "happening", though at least everybody kept their clothes on. Musicians as accomplished as the Kronos, and listeners as attentive as their fans, are wasted on stuff like this.

IAN BRUNSKILL

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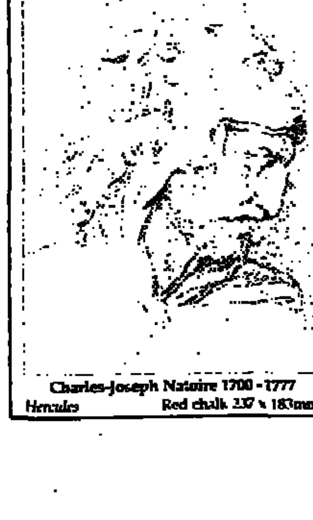

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Naivety at root of latest sending-off

Gascoigne again pays price for lack of discipline

By Kevin McCarra

PAUL GASCOIGNE'S sending-off in Rangers' 2-2 draw with Borussia Dortmund in a European Cup Champions' League match on Wednesday will be regarded as a mark of guilt but, in another sense, it is his overwhelming innocence that remains remarkable.

The England midfield player, 28, possesses mature judgment only when assessing the angle of a pass or the timing of a run. In matters of discipline, he remains incapable of calculating the consequences of his actions.

In that respect, he is almost gauche. The misdemeanour that brought his dismissal at the Westfalenstadion was the product of startling naivety. A few moments before receiving his second yellow card of the night, Gascoigne had been warned by the referee, Manuel Diaz Vega, of Spain, against prolonged questioning of decisions. The player was not to be diverted from confrontation, though, and, after 75 minutes, pursued the official down the pitch with a fatuous protest over a free kick awarded for handball.

Gascoigne's first booking of the evening may have been more orthodox, yet the offence, a foul on Andy Möller, was also inane. The Dortmund player was in no position to pose a threat when Gascoigne landed his crude challenge.

The yellow card for that indiscretion took the player over the disciplinary points threshold and ensured that he would miss his club's next European match. The ordering off guarantees that the ban will be extended by at least one game.

The true cost to Rangers, however, cannot be measured in the loss of Gascoigne's services late next year. Instead of wondering how he will cope without the player then, Walter Smith, the manager, may wonder what he is to do with him now. There will be time to consider the matter since he is suspended for the club's next two matches in Scotland.

Accumulated bookings and a one-game ban for bringing the game into disrepute by his conduct during last month's match at Aberdeen account for the sentence. The piecemeal accumulation that brought punishment of Gascoigne by the Scottish Football Association has been typical of his time at Ibrox since signing in a £4.2 million move from Lazio during the summer.

Some had expected there would be one special and shameful outburst in Glasgow, perhaps arising from the emotionally overwrought atmosphere of an Old Firm fixture. As it turns out, the public has seen only a stream of small but persistent offences.

The occasional clashes with opponents and disagreements with referees stem from Gascoigne having to make regular appearances after playing only sporadically for Lazio for the past few years because of injuries. Now that he is healthy enough to play most Saturdays, Gascoigne cannot avoid the truth — he is no longer the player he was.

All the operations have naturally eaten into his capabilities. There is a fitness of sorts and Gascoigne is known as an enthusiastic trainer, but a programme that brings matches twice a week seems to be exhausting him.

The player also lacks the speed he enjoyed as a younger man. Opponents have begun to suspect that, if they can raise the pace of the game, it will move beyond Gascoigne's reach. None of that prevents him from producing sublime football and, against Dortmund on Wednesday, he constructed the early domination that could have decided the outcome in Rangers favour.

His club might still be prepared to regard him as a valuable acquisition merely for those spells, but Gascoigne himself seems unsettled by the fleeting nature of his effectiveness. From frustration comes the frenetic nature of his behaviour on the field. Scrutiny of him will only intensify, perpetuating his problems.

Smith may not be eager to offload him but it was significant that the manager's response to suggestions that Chelsea might bid for him stopped well short of insistence that Gascoigne must, at all costs, stay at Ibrox.

A disconsolate Gascoigne makes his way to the dressing-room after his dismissal in Dortmund

Conwy broaden horizons

Non-League Football by Walter Gammie

CONWY United missed the chance of overtaking Barry Town at the top of the League of Wales when held to a 2-2 draw by Connah's Quay on Wednesday night. They are, nevertheless, enjoying a remarkable season of success that sees them chasing one of the coveted places in European competition next year.

By sharp irony, while Colwyn Bay, seven miles away, pursue their path in the UniBond League, Conwy's flying start to the season has been based upon the recruitment of two of English non-League football's most redoubtable strikers, Ken McKenna, 35, and Chris Camden, 32. Their goals have given the North Wales coast club a heavyweight cutting edge.

McKenna joined as assistant manager at the start of last season, when Paul Rowlands, the former Altrincham manager, took charge. McKenna, a formidable and occasionally fiery talent over many years with Runcorn and Altrincham, scored 30 goals and has already rattled in 23 this season.

Camden, whose goals had played a large part in Marine's success story had been lined up to join Conwy as player-coach by John Hulse, who took over as manager from Rowlands at the start of the season.

"He then had an offer from Witton Albion," Hulse said. "He started 17 matches and scored ten goals but Witton were leaking a few, so Ray Ransom decided to play five at the back and two speedy fellows up front and Chris was left out.

"He told them that, at his age, he didn't want to sit on the bench and three weeks ago came back to us. He lacks a bit of sharpness but he's played four matches and scored four goals."

Hulse's connection with McKenna and Camden goes back to the days when he managed Avenue, the Birkenhead club that enjoyed FA Sunday Cup success in the eighties.

"Their experience and enthusiasm is second to none," Hulse said. "It brings a terrific boost to the youngsters in the side." Conwy's decision to look outside Wales is an ambitious attempt under Gareth Rees, their chairman, to make the most of the benefits from the League of Wales.

Cecil Jones, the secretary, said: "With grants from the Football Association of Wales, we've put up floodlights, a new stand and terracing. Now that we are established as a national league, the Football Trust has given £300,000 that last season was split between the top three clubs. This season it will go to clubs four to six if those three finish top again."

The prize at the end of the season is two places in the Uefa Cup and one in the InterToto Cup. "It will be like a pools win to be in Europe," Hulse said.

The Austrian skier, Alexandra Meissnitzer, made her first appearance on the winner's podium at Val d'Isère, France, yesterday after a surprising victory in the women's super giant slalom. Meissnitzer, 22, is pictured while recording a time of 1min 14.58sec for her first career victory after a previous highest finish of fourth. She was twelfth in the first super giant slalom of the season in Vail, Colorado, and said: "I was disappointed with the place there. I had a long talk with my coach and he told me to take more chances." Heidi Zeller-Baehler, of Switzerland, was second. She is recovering from a calf injury and said: "It's the first time I have had a solid run this season. It's taken time to get back into shape after the injury."

Results, page 40

Castres case underlines need for clearer laws in professional era

GERALD DAVIES

Rugby Commentary

THE scenes at Swansea on Tuesday evening, when the Castres manager threatened to take his team off the field midway through the second half of the Heineken Cup match because of what he thought was a misguided and unjust referee, suggest that trouble lies ahead for rugby union.

Sadly, the sport must prepare itself for this. Unless the vexing questions relating to the arguable and often indeterminate nature of the game's laws are soon addressed, I fear that violent reaction of one sort or another will recur.

Guesswork plays a significant role on the observers' part when any game of rugby is viewed, while the players admit to performing to the principle, knowing that each official has his idiosyncrasies, of "playing to the referee".

This is certainly not a rationale for any sport which deems itself professional. Livelihoods will soon depend on it. Clarity, therefore, is essential. Rugby's convoluted laws and its many ambiguities remained permissible only as long as the game remained amateur; survival depended on large doses of a generous spirit.

The many borderline cases of the laws amounted to nothing that could not be settled over a gentlemanly beer and a good dinner. Rugby was, in essence, a gadabout's game; it was a lot of fun. If, in the upper echelons, the rugby grew to be more serious, with greater commitment demanded of the players, it was still a game to be played for its own sake.

The serious business of having to earn a living was left for another day and a club survived and prospered on weekly subscriptions and car-boot sales. Rugby's success was founded on this.

No sport pays as much attention to its main official as rugby. No sport relies so much on a variety of interpretation. So much emphasis is laid upon this that the danger for the game is that the winners can seem so often to be determined by the whims of the referee and his understanding of events in so many ill-defined areas.

Any one of several infringements can occur at any one time. Often it depends where the referee is looking. Who, for instance, is transgressing at the lineout and how many are up to no good? While he is looking at this, what about the threequarters overstepping their offside mark in midfield?

The referee deserves our sympathy but, perhaps, he is not so innocent. Every referee since the 1991 World Cup has ignored Law 20, which governs the scrum. This states that the ball should be put into the scrum down a middle line between the front rows. In fact, scrum halves put in the ball any way they like.

What is new about that? Rugby has always had to live with many interpretations and difficulties, not only from one referee to the next but from one country to another. However, such a liberal approach can no longer be sustained now that rugby has cast aside its amateur status.

On Tuesday evening, for example, the referee awarded 15 penalties and four free kicks against Castres in the first half, during which Swansea were not penalised at all. Admittedly, Castres were flagrant in their use of the fist and the boot. Never have examples of eye-gouging been so blatant.

However, the imbalance in the penalty count incensed the French club's committee and supporters. While Swansea were not guilty of Castres's wilder transgressions, they were certainly not innocent of milder offences such as offside and going over the top at the point of the tackle. Yet, as the figures show, they went scot-free.

Acknowledging that rugby is a flawed and inexact sport, Castres have every right to query this discrepancy. Such a widespread difference might suggest that French clubs are operating not so much under other interpretations but under another set of laws altogether.

Castres, therefore, failed to reach the semi-final stage, and both the club and its players lost a stream of revenue. This is a serious business. The old benevolent spirit, like it or not, has gone.

There are now substantial monetary rewards in the game; there are more on the way. With so much on offer, to win or lose must be seen to be more clearly related to the efforts of the players, rather than the vagaries of the referee.

If not, referees will increasingly need to be escorted from the field by a posse of guards, as Charles Muir was at St Helen's on Tuesday.

Second-team spoils go to Light Blues

Oxford Greyhounds	7
Cambridge LX Club	8

By a Correspondent

DESPITE the biting wind and light snow, the second teams of the two ancient universities staged a stirring contest at Iffley Road yesterday that could have gone either way, although Cambridge were the stronger side.

Ruffell won plenty of ball in the middle of the lineout, Ryan was a constant threat with his probing runs, and Spencer and Sexton were resolute outside. Yet Kennedy, a Blue at stand-off in 1993, frequently wasted opportunities through poor choice of options.

It was from his missed touch that Oxford gained the position from which scrum-half Jones burrowed over from close range. That, coupled with Sackree's touch-line conversion, brought them to within a point after eight minutes of the second half.

Cambridge had established their lead in the first half-hour through Kennedy's penalty goal and a try by Garfield after their best period of the match. They persisted in trying to play expansive rugby on a day that was better suited to kick and rush.

The closeness of the margin ensured a small but vocal crowd's interest was sustained all the way to the finish. On the stroke of full time, Mernagen's dropped goal attempt went agonisingly wide.

SCORERS: Greyhounds: Try: Jones. Conversion: Sacree. LX Club: Try: Garfield. Penalty goal: Kennedy

OXFORD UNIVERSITY GREYHOUNDS: J Sacree (St Edmund Hall, captain); N Booth (Worcester), J Wyatt (Worcester), D Magee (Trinity), J Tilley (Pembroke); M Mernagen (Keble), C Jones (University), J Bothwell (Merton), M Case (Worcester), D Grant (Worcester), C McCarthy (Templeton), R Elliott (Oriel), C Smith (Keble), J Britton (New), J Kindon (Queen's)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LX Club: J Rutter (St John's); S Sexton (Hughes Hall), D Moore (Trinity Hall), A Spencer (St John's), M Garfield (Fitzwilliam); A Kennedy (St John's), B Ryan (Homerton); D Brandt (Downing), J Edwards (St Catharine's), H Thomas (St Catherine's), A Nelstrop (Girton), G Fury (Hughes Hall, captain), D Ruffell (Homerton), M Holmes (Peterhouse), J Cocks (St Edmund's).

Referee: K Roberts (North Midlands)

Hussain's positive approach enhances captaincy

From Pat Gibson
in Peshawar, Pakistan

WATCHING Nasser Hussain playing pool with the rest of the England A cricket team at the British High Commission club in Islamabad, he is very much one of the boys. Listening to him telling those same players what he wants on the cricket field, there is no questioning his authority over them.

As Michael Atherton will be the first to admit, striking the right balance between being a part of the team yet at the same time being apart from it, is one of the most difficult aspects of the job for a young captain. Hussain seems to have accomplished it as effectively as Atherton did.

In fact, John Emburey, the England A team manager on their tour of Pakistan, goes so far as to say: "If England ever have to look for someone to take over from Atherton, if he was to get ill or injured or anything like that, I think Hussain could be a very good replacement."

Thinking along those lines shows what an impression Hussain has made on being entrusted with leading the first English expedition to these parts since the infamous Mike Gatting tour of 1987-88.

It has not been easy in a country where nothing is ever straightforward. England A have outplayed every side they have met so comprehensively that the first danger was complacency. Then it was boredom, because of the acute shortage of practice facilities and social activity.

Now the threat is frustration, as the rain that cost them the chance of winning the second international match at Rawalpindi and taking a winning 2-0 lead in the three-match series has followed them to the north-west frontier and may delay the start of the third game in the Arbab Niaz Stadium here today.

The players have already been warned to be on their guard in this sometimes lawless city, just 11 miles from the Khyber Pass and the Afganistan border, and Hussain will be underlining the message from a cricketing point of view in the same uncompromising terms as he has used throughout the tour.

"He has not said a lot," Emburey said, "but what he has said has been very constructive, very positive and very much to the point. He can be tough when he has to be tough and he can also get very annoyed when he has something to get annoyed about. In our first four-day game in Karachi, the boys had a bad morning and he really cracked the whip at lunchtime. They went out in the afternoon and took five wickets in the session to turn the game around."

The key to such firm leadership is having the respect of the players and Hussain has earned that through his batting. "He has shown the way," Emburey said. "He has a good technique for the wickets we have played on and the other players have learnt from him."

Hussain: earned respect

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MERCURY
COMMUNICATIONS

Martin takes place in last four after Medvedev's enforced retirement

Becker fails to lift black mood of grey match

FROM STUART JONES, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN MUNICH

EVEN Boris Becker, who likes nothing better than to make a drama out of a crisis, failed to inject any life into the first quarter-final of the Grand Slam Cup here yesterday. He extended it as long as he reasonably could before bringing to a swift and natural conclusion an occasion devoid of lustre, tension and passion.

In Frankfurt three weeks ago, he had enthralled capacity crowds by escaping time and again from perilous positions on his way to winning the ATP Tour championship finals. Yesterday, against Byron Black, of Zimbabwe, neither he nor the spectators appeared to be motivated by his predictable progress to the last four.

The stadium was barely half full when he started, 20 minutes behind schedule in mid-afternoon, with four careless errors. It was hardly any noisier when he finished, having thrown away any pretensions that the contest might be finely balanced. It was not in theory. Nor should it have been in practice.

The combination of Black and Becker might have conjured up images of shots being drilled and holes being cut into defences, but there was nothing as incisive or penetrative about the affair until the dreary first set had stumbled into a tie-break. Then, at last, the German decided that enough was enough.

He fired a couple of aces, broke his opponent three times to take it 7-1 and, with a contrasting sense of urgency, swept through the second set to go through 7-6, 6-1. He explained that, once he had become accustomed to Black's unusual style, "everything seemed to be rolling".

After reaching the semi-final for the first time, Becker added: "He fought well and played well until the tie-break. Then I had a good start with a clean forehand return and, once I had the first set, I knew more or less how to play him. Everything from then on seemed to be easier."

Black was plainly at a huge disadvantage. Giving away six inches in height, two years in age and 36 places in the world rankings, he hardly qualified as a lightweight. Whereas Becker has collected 44 titles, more than half of them indoors, Black has never won a tournament anywhere.

He was prominent primarily as a doubles player and is most easily recognisable for being one of the few professionals to operate with two hands on either flank. To compensate for his lack of flexibility and shortened reach, he is blessed with startling agility. Becker, by comparison, was as lithe as an ox yesterday.

When they met for the first time, in Basle three months ago, Becker won with equal ease. A cynic might have thought that he delayed an outcome which long appeared to be inevitable only for the sake of the coverage of the event on German television.

Becker will play Todd Martin in the last four after Martin's victory over Andrei Medvedev last night. Martin was leading 6-3, 3-6, 4-0 when the Ukrainian retired with a recurrence of a left-ankle injury. Earlier Medvedev disclosed that he was lucky to have been able to play in the tournament at all. When he arrived on Saturday, he was confined to a wheelchair, on doctor's orders

He was advised to visit Mohammed Khalifa, a therapist near Salzburg. "I thought that I would die on the table," Medvedev said, "but within two hours, I could walk. I'm not taking anything, not even anti-inflammatory drugs. It's a wonder that I can walk, let alone play. It's a miracle.

"I shouldn't have been able to fit into my tennis shoe until today. I couldn't even tie up the laces before I went to him. If that is not enough advertising, break a leg and go and see this guy." He is also considering taking on a new coach.

For the past few weeks Medvedev has been working on an informal basis with Bob Brett. "I have the instinct that what he tells me is right," Medvedev said. "I think he could be perfect for me." Brett clearly warms to eccentrics. His last client was Goran Ivanisevic.

LUDWIG HUEBL

Becker hits a backhand during his bloodless victory over Black in the quarter-finals of the Grand Slam Cup

World Cup position kept open for Lara

THE West Indies Cricket Board of Control (WICBC) will delay naming a World Cup squad until the end of January in the hope of persuading Brian Lara to play. Peter Short, the board president, said yesterday that he hoped there would be a "happy ending" to the dispute with Lara, who withdrew from the team to tour Australia at the last moment. "Brian Lara is too great a talent to let him go like that," he said.

In Australia, the West Indians were dismissed for 238 on the opening day of their game against New South Wales in Newcastle, with left-arm spinner David Freedman returning career-best figures of eight for 47.

Nottinghamshire have signed the Yorkshire batsman Ashley Metcalfe, 31, on a two-year contract.

Parke leads chase

SQUASH: Simon Parke led a strong British contingent in pursuit of the Mahindra Challenge title in Bombay yesterday with a 38-minute first-round win over Ahmed Faizy, of Egypt (Colin McQuillan writes). However, Parke's England team-mate, Del Harris, was among a handful of leading players who struggled with the conditions at the Cricket Club of India; he lost to Derek Ryan, of Ireland.

Anthony Hill, of Australia, was beaten by the South African Craig Van der Walth, while Hill's compatriot, Rodney Eyles, the defending champion, was fortunate to recover from 1-2 down against Martin Heath, of Scotland.

Islanders gain strength

RUGBY UNION: The Western Samoans, badly in need of a victory after defeats by two English divisions in the past week, have strengthened their line-up to play the South West at Gloucester on Saturday night. Their coach, Bryan Williams, has named 12 of the side that drew the international match in Scotland last month.

WESTERN SAMOANS (v South West, at Gloucester, Saturday): V Patu; B Lima, T Vaega, K Tuigamala, A Telea; D Kellett, J Filemu; M Mika, O Matauiau, P Fatialofa, L Falaniko, M Birtwistle, S Kaleta, P Lam (capt), S Vaifale.

New *rules take effect*

RUGBY LEAGUE: In a series of rule changes, from next Monday, the scoring team will restart play after each score, scrums will be taken 20 metres instead of ten metres in from touch, and there will be no striking at the play-the-ball, which must be played backwards at all times. "Our aim is to make the game as exciting as possible," Maurice Lindsay, chief executive of the Rugby Football League, said.

Top seeds go through

RACKETS: James Male and Willie Boone, the top two seeds, reached the semi-finals of the Lacoste British amateur championship at Queen's Club yesterday. Male, who has held the world title for the past seven years, was too strong and mobile for Charles Danby, while Boone, the holder, was in devastating form against the promising Etonian, Alexander Smith-Bingham.

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Charlotte 94 Cleveland 82; Boston 105 Miami 101, Philadelphia 108 Dallas 87; Washington 96 Atlanta 79; Chicago 101 New York 94; Minnesota 108 New Jersey 97; Houston 112 LA Lakers 99; Orlando 109 Golden State 107.

ATHENS: European Champion Clubs' Cup: Group A: Semi-final: Iraklis (Gr) bt Unicaja Malaga (Sp) 71-69 Group B: Semi-final: Panathinaikos (Gr) bt Benfica (Por) 67-51

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Birmingham 96 (Gordon 26, Lloyd 25, Dorsey 22) Derby 92 (Humphrey 19, Simms 19). Leicester 71 (Temming 28) Manchester 97 (Robinson 32, Tresvant 18, Gardner 17); Worthing 89 (Irish 27, Plair 18) London Towers 99 (Lewis 25, Windless 24, Bucknall 20)

BIATHLON

OESTERSUND: World Cup: Men: 20km: 1, V Hietalahti (Fin) shooting 0+0+0+0, in 54min 42.9sec; 2, S Tarasov (Russ) 0+0+0+0 at 02.9sec; 3, P Mouslimov (Russ) 0+2+1+0, 16.2, 4, A Kobelev (Russ) 1+1+1+0, 23.0; 5, S Fischer (Ger) 0+1+2+0, 48.6; 6, I Masarik (Cz) 0+0+1+0, .49.7; 7, P Carrara (It) 0+1+0+1, 1.02.9, 8, P Garabik (Cz) 0+1+0+1 1.05.2; 9, F Luck (Ger) 0+0+2+0, 1.05.8; 10, V Maigurov (Russ) 2+0+0+1, 1.06.2

FOOTBALL

EUROPEAN CUP CHAMPIONS' LEAGUE: Group A: Aalborg 2 FC Porto 2; Nantes 0 Panathinaikos 0 Group B: Legia Warsaw 0 Spartak Moscow 1; Blackburn 4 Rosenborg 1. Group C: Steaua Bucharest 0 Juventus 0; Borussia Dortmund 2 Rangers 2. *Group D: Ajax 4 Ferencvaros 0:* Grasshopper 0 Real Madrid 2

Quarter-final draw: Legia Warsaw v Panathinaikos, Nantes v Spartak Moscow; Real Madrid v Juventus; Borussia Dortmund v Ajax. To be played March 6 and 20.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Aberdeen 1 Kilmarnock 1 (Abandoned 57min, floodlight failure)

LEAGUE OF WALES: Conwy 2 Connah's Quay 2 League Cup: Group one first round: Cemaes Bay 2 Caernarfon 4.

CALOR COUNTY ANTRIM SHIELD: Second round: Ards 0 Crusaders 1, Carrick 0 *Portadown 4; Glentoran 1 Ballymena 2;* Larne 0 Glenavon 2

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: Tottenham 2 Bristol City 0. Luton 4 Bristol Rovers 1; Norwich 1 Arsenal 1; Oxford Utd 0 Southampton 3; Watford 0 Wimbledon 3 Second division: Bath 2 *Torquay 2; Cardiff 2* Swansea 0.

PONTINS CENTRAL LEAGUE: First division: Leeds 1 Manchester Utd 2; Oldham 0 Derby 1. Second division: Aston Villa 2 Leicester 2; Barnsley 2 Sunderland 1. Blackpool 2 Middlesbrough 4

SCHOOLS: Fuji Film Trophy: Fourth *round: Northampton 0 Nottingham 2.*

CRICKET

PAARL (First day of four, England XI won toss) England XI have scored 263 for eight against Boland

ENGLAND XI First innings

R A Smith b Stelling	39
*A J Stewart b Stelling	39
J P Crawley st Germishuys b Drew	6
G A Thorpe c Germishuys b Drew	56
G A Hick b Henderson	32
†R C Russell not out	45
M Watkinson c Stelling b Henderson	24
D Gough b Willoughby	3
P J Martin c Germishuys b DeFreitas	3
R K Illingworth not out	7
Extras (lb 5, w 1, nb 3)	9
Total (8 wkts)	263

M C Ilott to bat

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-54, 2-74, 3-113, 4-160, 5-180, 6-217, 7-224, 8-233

BOWLING: DeFreitas 14-9-17-1; Willoughby 17-1-63-1; Stelling 13-4-36-2; Henderson 35-13-65-2; Drew 28-4-77-2

BOLAND: L D Ferreira, B C Baguley, T Lazard, K C Jackson, W F Stelling, *A P Kuiper, P A J DeFreitas, †L-M Germishuys, C W Henderson, C M Willoughby, B J Drew

NEWCASTLE: Tour Match (First day of four): West Indians 238 (C L Hooper 63, S L Campbell 53; D Freedman 8-47) New South Wales 13-0

GOLF

AUCKLAND: New Zealand Open: Leading first round scores: 65: R Stephens (Aus). D Dunakey (US), P O'Malley (Aus). 66: R Farley (Aus), S Thompson (NZ), R Pampling *(Aus)* 67: *M Harwood (Aus).*

ICE HOCKEY

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE (NHL): Hartford 7 New York Islanders 4, Montreal 4 New Jersey 2, New York Rangers 5 Chicago 5 (OT); *Tampa Bay 2 Anaheim 1;* Los Angeles 6 Winnipeg 3.

RUGBY LEAGUE

STONES CHAMPIONSHIP: Second division: Hunslet 17 Barrow 5.

TOUR MATCH: Cumbria Under-18 0 Australian Schools 54

RUGBY UNION

Heineken Cup: Pool C: Leinster 23 Pontypridd 22

Final table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leinster	2	2	0	0	47	43	4
Pontypridd	2	1	0	1	53	35	2
Milan	2	0	0	2	33	55	0

OXFORD: Second XV Varsity Match: Oxford University Greyhounds 7 Cambridge University LX Club 8

SCHOOLS: Wrekin College 12, Liverpool College 0.

TENNENTS INTER-DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIP: Richmond: Scottish Exiles 17 Edinburgh District 6. Kircaldy: North and Midlands 53 Glasgow District 18

SKIING

VAL D'ISERE: World Cup: Women: Super giant slalom: 1, A Meissnitzer (Austria) 1min 14 58sec; 2, H Zeller-Baehler (Switz) 1:14 97; 3, M Suhadolc (Slov) 1 15.13, 4, C Montillet (Fr) 1 15 18, 5, H Ingeborg Marken (Nor) 1 15 19; 6, K Seizinger (Ger) 1:15.40; 7, M Ertl (Ger) 1.15 44; 8, T Schneider (Austria) 1 15 46; 9, A Wachter (Austria) 1:15.55. 10, H Zurbriggen (Switz) 1 15 56 Standings (after two races). 1, Ertl 136 points; 2, Meissnitzer 122; 3, Zeller-Bahler and Seizinger 120 Overall (after four races) 1, Seizinger 220; 2, Ertl 151, 3, Meissnitzer 148

TIGNES: World Cup: Freestyle: Ballet: Men: 1, H Baumgartner (Switz) 26 85 pts; 2, I Edmundson (US) 25 96; 3, J Bodnar (US) 24 50 Women: 1, Y Batalova, (Russ) 28 30; 2, C Fechoz (Fr), 25 80; 3, A Johansson, (Swe) 24 55 Other: 8, V Simpson, (GB) 22 45

SNOOKER

FRANKFURT: German Open: Second round: K Doherty (Ire) bt J Parrott (Eng) 5-4; *M Bennett (Wal) bt S James (Eng) 5-3;* A McManus (Sco) bt P Ebdon (Eng) 5-4; D Roe (Eng) bt S Davis (Eng) 5-3 Quarter-finals: J Higgins (Sco) bt D Morgan (Wales) 5-4

SQUASH

BOMBAY: Mahindra International Challenge: First round: M Cairns (Eng) bt D Jenson (Aus) 15-5, 15-4, 9-15, 17-16 A Wagih (Egypt) bt A Behl (India) 15-3, 15-7, 15-7; S Parke (Eng) bt A Faizy (Egypt) 15-5, 15-5, 15-10; P Gunter (Eng) bt T Hands (Eng) 15-9, 15-13, 3-15, 15-13; C Walker *(Eng)* bt O El Borolossy *(Egypt)* 15-11, 15-10, 14-17, 15-9; S Meads (Eng) bt H Wions (Ger) 15-6, retd injured; B Davis (Aus) bt A Al Ghareeb (Kuwait) 15-2, 15-12, 15-8; C Van der Walth (SA) bt A Hill (Aus) 17-15, 15-2, 15-6, A Kirkland (Eng) bt M Clark (US) 15-6, 11-15, 11-15, 15-5, 15-7; D Ryan (Ire) bt D Harris (Eng) 8-15, 15-8, 7-15, 15-12, 15-10; *J Bonetat (Fr) bt P Gregory (Gr)* 15-6, 15-6, 15-6; P Nicol (Scot) bt A Barada (Egypt) 15-11, 10-15, 15-3, 11-15, 15-8; R Eyles (Aus) bt M Heath (Scot) 8-15, 15-11, 13-15, 15-12, 15-9, D Meddings (Eng) bt Arjun Singh (India) 15-10, 15-9, 15-13; M Chaloner (Eng) beat F Usandizaga (Arg) 15-6, 15-7, 15-5. B Martin (Aus) bt D Preece (United *Arab Emirates) 15-5, 15-11, 15-8*

TENNIS

MUNICH: Grand Slam Cup: Quarter-final: B Becker (Ger) bt B Black (Zim) 7-6, 6-1, T Martin (US) bt A Medvedev (Ukr) 6-3, 3-6, 4-0 (Medvedev retd injured), G Ivanisevic (Cro) bt P Sampras (US) w/o

FIXTURES

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated

FOOTBALL

BORD GAIS LEAGUE OF IRELAND: Premier division: Athlone v Drogheda (8.0): Shelbourne v UCD.

FA PREMIER LEAGUE: Under-18 Trophy: West Midlands v Worcestershire.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Stones Championship

Sheffield v Workington

TOUR MATCH: Lancashire Under-18 v Australian Schoolboys (Leigh RFC)

OTHER SPORT

BACKETBALL: Budweiser League, Doncaster Panthers v Newcastle Comets (8.0). Leopards v Thames Valley

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LT6128

Doyle stirs emotions in pursuit of office

BY PETER BRYAN

CYCLE racing in Britain is facing a division not seen since 1942, when Percy Stallard cocked a snook at officialdom and promoted the first road race of modern times.

The schism in the membership is over who will be elected president of the British Cycling Federation (BCF) at the start of its annual meeting in Manchester tomorrow.

For the first time since Ian Emmerson was appointed ten years ago, the election will be contested. His challenger is Tony Doyle, Britain's former professional world pursuit champion, who threw his hat into the ring after making a speech highly critical of the BCF and some of its senior officials last September.

Doyle first became a national official last year when he was elected, by a margin of one vote, director of track racing — a post that also gave him a place on the BCF board of directors.

The past year has not been easy for Emmerson. He has been largely responsible for restructuring the federation, moving headquarters from Kettering to the new National Cycling Centre, in Manchester, with a virtually new staff to train.

He is Britain's leading international official as vice-president of the International Cycling Union, vice-chairman of the Commonwealth Games Committee and a committee member of the British Olympic Association. He was the sport's prime advocate for the building of the £9 million velodrome in Manchester.

Doyle's criticism of the BCF's fall in membership and its coaching policies has generated support from grassroots clubs. Emmerson conceded last night that the vote would be tight, but felt it would go his way.

Doyle: candidacy

Morgan's miss gives Higgins his cue

FROM PHIL YATES IN FRANKFURT

AN ABILITY to ignore frayed nerves is a prerequisite for success in snooker and John Higgins did just that to beat Darren Morgan 5-4 in the quarter-finals of the German Open here yesterday.

Higgins, No 2 in the provisional world rankings, emerged victorious after a contest of the highest quality purely as a result of one crucial error from his more experienced opponent in the deciding frame. Yet, when Higgins led 3-1 and 4-2, his passage seemed assured.

Breaks of 82, 60 and 44 earned Higgins a 3-1 advantage and he moved two ahead with three to play by plundering the sixth frame on the black with a 69 clearance after Morgan, leading 55-0, had undercut a straightforward pink.

Morgan, a stubborn character, did not allow Higgins to bother the scorers in the next two frames as he drew level at 4-4 with runs of 103 — his fourth century of the tournament — and 75, and he also forced his way back into contention from 0-42 in the decider.

Trailing by only six points with three reds remaining, Morgan had his chance but he succumbed to the pressure by missing a long blue. Higgins cued unerringly to fashion a 43 clearance and will meet Alan McManus or David Roe tomorrow for a place in the final.

"It's a big incentive to prove that I'm not a one-season wonder," Higgins, who announced his arrival during the 1994-95 campaign by winning the Skoda Grand Prix and the British Open, said.

While the majority of his rivals still had their sights on the last available ranking event title of 1995, Steve Davis was yesterday representing Europe against the United States in the Mosconi Cup, a nine-ball pool competition, at Basildon. He ended a disappointing year with a 5-3 second-round defeat by Roe, the No 16 seed, late on Wednesday.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Dealer North Game all Rubber bridge

North:
♠J 10
♥A 10 4 2
♦8 7 4 2
♣K 9 3

West:
♠K 2
♥K 8 7 6 5
♦10 6 5
♣J 7 2

East:
♠Q 9 8 7 6 5 4 3
♥9
♦—
♣A Q 10 6

South:
♠A
♥Q J 3
♦A K Q J 9 3
♣8 5 4

W	N	E	S
—	Pass	4♠	5♦
All pass			

Contract: Five Diamonds by South. Lead: King of Spades

After a week of squeeze end-plays, this refresher is about an easier type of end-play, where you don't have to follow the discards so closely.

After winning the ace of spades, South draws three rounds of trumps. He continues with the queen of hearts, covered by king and ace. One possible play would be to ruff dummy's ten of spades and play ten and jack of hearts. When the hearts don't break the declarer leads a low club towards dummy, hoping to duck it to East. But an alert West will go in with the jack and the defence will make three club tricks.

After the first round of hearts, however, it is better to continue with two more rounds ending in dummy. Then when the hearts don't break declarer plays the ten of spades. When East plays the queen, South discards a small club — a 'loser on loser' play. East now has to give him a trick in clubs or concede a ruff and discard.

☐ The Macallan International Bridge Pairs Championship, in association with *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, will be held at the White House Hotel, Albany Street, London NW1, on January 24-26, 1996. For details and tickets, contact the Macallan Box Office, 31 Queens Road, Mortlake, London SW14 8PH. Information: 0181-878 5844.

☐ Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Material Values

For those new to chess it is essential to memorise the values of the pieces, since giving away a unit of greater value for a less useful piece can often be fatal. Taking the pawn as worth one, knight and bishop would count as three each, rook as five and queen as nine. In the endgame, when there is less danger of a snap checkmate, the king has approximately the same strength as a knight or bishop, but its real value is beyond price, since checkmate ends the game.

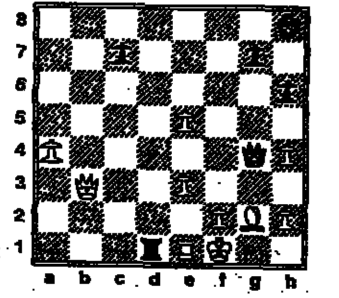
There has been a constant debate as to the relative worth of rook and pawn against two minor pieces, such as bishop and knight. That is normally a borderline case. In the following game from the recently concluded Belgrade tournament, Alexei Shirov breaks into the black camp by trading knight and bishop for rook and two pawns. This transaction should normally be in favour of the possessor of the rook, and this game turns out to be no exception.

White: Alexei Shirov
Black: Alexander Beliavsky
Belgrade, November 1995

Queen's Gambit Declined

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nf3	d5
4	Nc3	Be7
5	Bg5	h6
6	Bh4	0-0
7	e3	b6
8	Qb3	dxc4
9	Bxc4	Bb7
10	Ne5	Nfd7
11	Nxf7	Rxf7
12	Bxe6	Bxh4
13	Bxf7+	Kh8
14	Bd5	Nc6
15	Qa4	a6
16	0-0	b5
17	Qd1	Nb6
18	Bf3	Qe8
19	a4	b4
20	Ne2	Rd8
21	Nf4	Bg5
22	Nd3	a5
23	Re1	Ba6
24	Nc5	Bc4
25	Nb7	Ra8
26	b3	Bg8
27	Rc1	Nd5
28	Rc5	Nce7
29	Nxa5	Rd8
30	Qd3	Ng6
31	Be4	Nh4
32	Nc6	Rd6
33	Ne5	Nc3
34	Rxc3	bxc3
35	Qxc3	Bf6
36	g3	Qh5
37	gxh4	Bxe5
38	dxe5	Qg4+
39	Kf1	Rd1
40	Bg2	Bxb3
41	Qxb3	*Black resigns*

Diagram of final position



Chess for Charity

On Saturday 20 January 1996 I shall be giving a chess display, taking on allcomers to raise funds for the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit Appeal for St George's Hospital, Tooting. Those wishing to play or support the venture should contact Lucy DeVille, Appeal Co-ordinator on 0181 725 5096.

☐ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

SCALLOPINI
a. Crustaceans
b. A decorative hem
c. A meat dish

PSEUDERY
a. Lying
b. Comic verse
c. Pomposity

RAFIK
a. A companion
b. Basketwork
c. An RAF trainee mechanic

RITUALIA
a. Vertebral ligaments
b. Decorative vaulting
c. Ceremonial objects

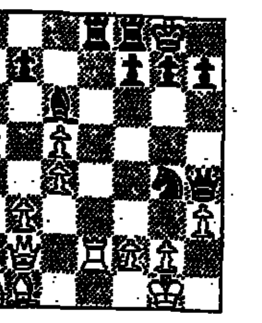
Answers on page 42

WINNING MOVES

By Raymond Keene

This position is from the game Yanowsky - Toriran, Canada 1953. Although White is two pawns ahead his queenside pieces are still asleep. Meanwhile Black has developed all his pieces to aggressive squares, so it is not surprising that he has a winning combination. Can you spot it?

Solution on page 42



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Announcement on pool betting organisation imminent

Howard considers Tote options

By Richard Evans, Racing Journalist of the Year

MICHAEL HOWARD, the Home Secretary, is expected to deliver a new year present to racing by pronouncing on the future of the Tote. Although the senior Cabinet minister announced last February that a consultation paper on the pool betting organisation would be published within six months, the August deadline proved unrealistic because of complex issues facing civil servants — including the possibility of any Tote transfer breaching EC laws.

However, the bureaucratic logjam has now been broken and the conclusions of a review by Home Office officials has been presented to Howard, who is well aware of the need to publish the consultation paper as quickly as possible. The wish to have control of the Tote is one of racing's cherished dreams, and, in February, Howard stressed his intention "to review the options for the Tote in a way which preserves the extent to which racing benefits from the Tote's activities."

Howard, whose personal enthusiasm and commitment have kept the future of the Tote on the Home Office agenda, is well aware of the anxieties of the big bookmakers concerning any change in its status. In particular, the "Big Three" want to see an end to the Tote's exclusive licence for pool betting and be allowed to run their own betting pools. However, that would be vigorously opposed by racing as a number of small betting pools would scupper the chance of creating regular small stake-big jackpot payouts.

The bookmakers are also concerned about the prospect of the British Horseracing Board (BHB) owning Tote betting shops and would almost certainly like to see them sold separately. However, the Commons home affairs select committee recommended in 1991 that when the Tote was transferred from Home Office control it should be as an integrated unit — a view supported by Lord Wyatt of Weeford, the Tote chairman.

Howard will have to consider to what extent transferring a pool betting monopoly direct to racing would be consistent with competition laws. However, one option being considered by ministers, which would avoid many of the potential problems, is to devise a solution which does not require legislation.

That could see the BHB being given greater control of the Tote, through appointment of the Tote board and chairman, without the pool betting organisation being transferred to racing lock, stock and barrel. Although no firm timetable has been set for the publication of the consultation paper, it should be in the early weeks of 1996.

HUGH ROUTLEDGE

Lucky Eddie, left, takes the last on the way to victory in the Mendip Plywood Novices' Hurdle at Taunton yesterday

Large Action injured

LARGE ACTION, among the favourites for the Champion Hurdle, has a leg injury and is likely to miss the Cheltenham Festival. The seven-year-old had been scheduled to contest the Bula Hurdle at Cheltenham tomorrow, but yesterday his owner, Brian Stewart-Brown, was coming to terms with the setback.

"The horse has an injury but we are not entirely sure of the extent of it," he said. "I don't know if he will be able to run in the Champion Hurdle but it looks unlikely. These things happen in racing and you have to live with them."

William Hill promoted Alderbrook to 4-1 favourite with the Irish-trained Montelado on 9-2 and Mysilv at 7-1, a point ahead of Atours.

Improvement on the cards for Our Kris

CHELTENHAM

CHANNEL 4

TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

2.00: After a promising debut, Chicodari required the stewards' intervention to make the winner's enclosure here last time. He can improve but **Our Kris** could not be faulted on his Newbury introduction. The new recruit travelled strongly throughout the race and has the scope to do well over hurdles. He earns a narrow vote over Danjing, whose debut defeat by Paddy's Return at Ascot reads particularly well. On that showing, he should again account for Ocean Hawk.

Elation had the disappointing Executive Design well behind at Newcastle last month but the latter, optimistically ridden on that occasion, is capable of much better. Domappel and Dtoto are newcomers worth noting in market exchanges.

2.35: The handicapper has been kind to impressive Ascot winner Run Up The Flag, who has prospects of following up here. However, he may be better racing right-handed and preference is for **Dont Tell The Wife**. Charlie Egerton's new recruit won first time up last term and is reported fit enough to do himself justice. The ground and trip are in his favour.

This extended three miles may just stretch Lusty Light, whose best form is at shorter distances. Jenny Pitman's charge looks harshly handicapped with Ghia Gneuiagh, yet the latter disappointed when favourite at Haydock recently. Henrietta Knight has performed wonders with the front-running Edimbourg, but this represents a tough assignment. Unholy Alliance, well placed at the smaller venues, was only once out of the frame in his last 19 starts. That record is under threat here.

3.10: Although it is never wise to take short odds in novice chases, **Seven Towers** cannot realistically be opposed. Mary Reveley's promising six-year-old lowered McGregor The Third's colours on his chasing debut and should be more at home over this trip. Nevertheless, he will have to jump well to contain Cropredy Lad, a good winner over Newbury's stiff fences last time. Grand Applause looks best of the remainder.

3.45: Gillan Cove, an out-and-out stayer, seems sure to go close. After a troubled passage, the six-year-old rallied strongly to snatch second place behind Greenhil Tare Away at this venue last time. However, he would prefer easier ground and appears closely matched with Trickle Lad at these weights.

Wee Windy, who races from 6lb out of the handicap, is effectively 11lb higher for a bloodless victory at Fontwell. With Better Times Ahead having earned the handicapper's wrath, it is worth chancing that **Bell Staffboy** will see out this trip. Chris Broad's progresive six-year-old needs good ground and comes here in peak form, having beaten Celibate in good style at Warwick last month. Jathib may prove best of the remainder.

JULIAN MUSCAT

DONCASTER

THUNDERER

12.15 Yacht. 12.45 Current Speech. 1.15 Glemot. 1.45 Le Meille. 2.20 Full O'Praise. 2.55 Sigma Run. 3.30 Fairies Farewell.

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM (7.30AM INSPECTION) SIS

12.15 GLASGOW PADDOCKS SELLING HURDLE

(£2,177. 2m 110yd) (20 runners)

1 P BAROSKI 27 (B) J L Harris 4-11-8 J Lodder –
2 6204 RUDI'S PRIDE 16 (B) S Bell 4-11-8 M Dwyer 91
3 00- SALUTATION 263F T Kersey 4-11-8 Susan Kersey –
4 510 RAY RIVER 36 (D,G) K Wingrove 3-11-0 J Ryan 84
5 40U2 YACHT 15 (F) C Mann 3-11-0 R Dunwoody [illegible]
6 0 BLOTOFT 20 Mrs S Austin 3-10-8 D Wilkinson 76
7 63 CANTE CHICO 15 T Thomson Jones 3-10-8 L Wyer 80
8 343 CENTAUR EXPRESS 48 A Streeter 3-10-8 T Eley 85
9 300 HEAVENS ABOVE 9 Mrs J Brown 3-10-8 F Leahy (3) 73
10 03 HIGHBANK 20 Mrs M Reveley 3-10-8 G Lee (3) 96
11 4525 HIGH FLOWN 18 R Thompson 3-10-8 W Fry 81
12 00 HORSETRADER 11F B Baugh 3-10-8 Gary Lyons –
13 40 NIGHT TIME 8 O Sherwood 3-10-8 J A McCarthy 87
14 0 ROSCOMMON LAD 15 (B) R Hollinshead 3-10-8 M W Martin (7) –
15 50 SAATCHMO 25 J Spearing 3-10-8 Miss C Spearing (7) 80
16 4 SEE YOU AGAIN 20 (B) M Britain 3-10-8 D Bentley 88
17 4 TOMMYKNOCKER 104 J Jenkins 3-10-8 C Rae (7) –
18 0 ANCHOR CROWN 41 J Jenkins 3-10-3 D Yellowlees (7) –
19 54 RUBY ROCK 25 B Murray 3-10-3 O Pears 79
20 034 SUNDAY MAIL TOO 31 Miss L Perratt 3-10-3 F Perratt (3) 91

3-1 Yacht, 5-1 Night Time, 6-1 Highbank, 8-1 Centaur Express, 12-1 Ray River, High Flown, 14-1 others.

12.45 DOORKNOCKER CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,140: 2m 110yd) (11)

1 2213 FRONTIER FLIGHT 21 (D,BF,F) Miss L Siddall 5-12-0 E Husband 97
2 383- MANABOUTTHEHOUSE 408 G Thorner 8-12-0 R Massey 89
3 5622 BRACKENTHWAITE 9 (B) L Lloyd-James 5-11-6 A Lamach 98
4 F4-1 MR MORIARTY 20 (D,F) S Bowring 4-11-5 G Lee [illegible]
5 624/ TEMPERING 7F D Chapman 9-11-3 F Perratt –
6 P-06 CURRENT SPEECH 15 M H Easterby 4-11-2 F Leahy 82
7 P0-0 NO WORD 15 (F) R Bastiman 8-11-0 H Bastiman –
8 66-4 ANTARTICTERN 20 G Oldroyd 5-10-13 P Midgley 89
9 200/ SHOOTING LODGE 1155 J Jenkins 7-10-11 C Rae (5) –
10 -002 RAFTER-J 2 J A Harris 4-10-7 Guy Lewis 89
11 80/5 IRISH GROOM 83 A Streeter 8-10-0 P Carey (3) 85

7-2 Mr Moriarty, 4-1 Brackenthwaite, 5-1 Manabouthehouse, 6-1 Frontier Flight, Current Speech, 8-1 No Word, Antartictern, 16-1 others.

1.15 VULRORY'S CLOWN CHASE

(Limited handicap: £4,728: 2m 3f 110yd) (6)

1 P10/ CARBISDALE 650 (C,F,G,S) Mrs M Reveley 9-11-7 L Wyer –
2 1232 GLEMOT 23 (F,G,S) K Bailey 7-11-1 R Dunwoody 98
3 -224 BAS DE LAINE 20 (B,F,G) O Sherwood 9-10-13 M Richards 97
4 1120 STAY AWAKE 13 (F,G,S) Mrs M Reveley 9-10-13 N Smith 89
5 41P- NEWLANDS-GENERAL 234 (CD,G,S) J Fitzgerald 9-10-7 M Dwyer 89
6 1111 GO UNIVERSAL 20 (D,F,G,S) C Brooks 7-10-7 G Bradley [illegible]

9-4 Glemot, 3-1 Go Universal, 9-2 Stay Awake, 5-1 Carbisdale, 6-1 Newlands-General, 8-1 Bas De Laine.

1.45 CARBON LINK LTD NOVICES CHASE

(£3,730: 3m) (4)

1 0-13 LE MEILLE 27 (F) A Jarvis 6-11-6 A Lamach (3) [illegible]
2 U23- CELTIC TOWN 256 (S) O Sherwood 7-11-0 J A McCarthy 90
3 F1-F YOUNG DUBLINER 10 (G) Mrs J Brown 6-11-0 M Dwyer 84
4 65/5 JARRWAH 11 (G) J Spearing 7-10-9 J Lodder –

4-5 Le Meille, 9-4 Celtic Town, 6-1 Young Dubliner, 8-1 Jarrwah.

2.20 DONCASTER RACECOURSE SPONSORSHIP CLUB HANDICAP CHASE (£4,414: 2m 110yd) (5)

1 105- MONDAY CLUB 246 (D,F,G,S) J Tuck 11-12-0 S McNeill 94
2 41F1 TIME WON'T WAIT 23 (D,F,G) R Phillips 6-11-11 J Railton [illegible]
3 -411 RODEO STAR 10 (B,C,D,F,G,S) N Tinkler 9-11-8 (6ex) G Bradley 95
4 2122 FULL O'PRAISE 23 (CD,F,G) P Calver 8-10-12 L Wyer 94
5 F230 DRUMSTICK 13 (D,BF,F,G,S) K Bailey 9-10-6 R Dunwoody 98

7-4 Time Won't Wait, 5-2 Rodeo Star, 4-1 Full O'Praise, 6-1 Monday Club, Drumstick.

2.55 SAUCY KIT NOVICES HURDLE

(£2,696: 2m 4f) (19)

1 33-1 STORM NORTH 30 (D,F) Miss V Williams 5-11-6 Blythe Miller 86
2 P0/ ALTHREY BLUE 573 F Lloyd 6-11-0 S Wynne –
3 4P APRIL WILLOW 30 M Wilkinson 8-11-0 P Crowley (7) 63
4 5-P0 BHAVNAGAR 8 G Elliott 4-11-0 L Wyer 89
5 446- BOLD AMBITION 279 T Kersey 8-11-0 Susan Kersey 89
6 BOLD JOKER 45F G Oldroyd 4-11-0 P Midgley (3) –
7 4 CAMPAIGN 10 M Hammond 4-11-0 R Dunwoody 81
8 P- CANOVAS HEART 76F Bob Jones 6-11-0 V Smith –
9 U-3 DJAIS 8 J Jenkins 6-11-0 G Bradley 91
10 -256 HUNTERS' HEAVEN 15 J Mackie 4-11-0 T Eley 80
11 -600 JAVA SHRINE 9 J Tuck 4-11-0 S McNeill 58
12 1333 M-I-FIVE 18 (F,G) R Thompson 4-11-0 W Fry –
13 53 NEEDWOOD JOKER 20 J A Harris 4-11-0 J Lodder 65
14 63-5 SIGMA RUN 28 (G) J Edwards 6-11-0 D Bentley [illegible]
15 0 SOMMERSBY 8 Mrs N Macauley 4-11-0 S Wynne –
16 0/P- BRIGG FOLLY 429 J Thorpe 5-10-9 Mr R Thornton (7) –
17 416- DARK PHOENIX 210 (G) O Brennan 5-10-9 M Brennan –
18 0-40 RASCALLY 2 Miss L Siddall 5-10-9 M Dwyer 66
19 ZAINEH 1201F M Hammond 5-10-9 Mr C Bonner (3) –

5-1 Campaign, 6-1 Storm North, 7-1 Sigma Run, Djais, 8-1 Dark Phoenix, Needwood Joker, 10-1 Hunters' Heaven, 12-1 others.

3.30 JULIET MARES ONLY STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,277. 2m 110yd) (8)

1 6- AUNTIE ALICE 236 J Fitzgerald 5-11-4 W Dwan –
2 BITTER MOON N Chamberlain 4-11-4 Miss C Metcalfe (7) –
3 COMPUTERAID LADY R Curtis 5-11-4 D Morris –
4 FAIRIES FAREWELL S Sherwood 5-11-4 G Upton –
5 FRANK IRISH G Thomas 4-11-4 C Thorner (7) –
6 MID DAY CHASER P Webber 4-11-4 Mr P Scott (7) –
7 ROSIE Mrs S Lamyman 5-11-4 J McLaughlin –
8 0 THE KILLALOE RUN 62 (BF) J Jefferson 4-11-4 M Dwyer –

5-4 Fairies Farewell, 11-4 Auntie Alice, 5-1 Frank Irish, 6-1 The Killaloe Run, 12-1 Mid Day Chaser, 14-1 Computeraid Lady, 16-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: Mrs M Reveley, 15 winners from 61 runners, 24.6%; M H Easterby, 4 from 23, 17.4%; N Tinkler, 5 from 30, 16.7%; J Fitzgerald, 9 from 59, 15.3%; M Hammond, 5 from 35, 14.3%; O Sherwood, 4 from 28, 14.3%.

JOCKEYS: R Dunwoody, 4 winners from 10 rides, 40.0%; L Wyer, 9 from 42, 21.4%; M Dwyer, 7 from 47, 14.9%. Only qualifiers.

Remittance Man retired

NICKY HENDERSON, the Lambourn trainer, yesterday announced the retirement of Remittance Man. Henderson said: "We have decided to retire Remittance Man after his race at Sandown on Friday. Since that race he has had a recurrence of his leg trouble, and although not serious we don't want to risk any further injury." The 11-year-old finished last of four behind Lonesome Glory at Sandown.

At his best, Remittance Man was a high-class chaser, the winner of 13 of his 17 races over fences including the 1992 Queen Mother Champion Chase.

RESULTS FROM YESTERDAY'S THREE MEETINGS

Taunton

Going: good

12.50 (3m 110yd hdle) 1, Norman's Convinced (D Bridgwater, 10-11 fav); 2, Soul Trader (11-2), 3, King Acrylic (50-1) 9 ran 3l, 11l. M Pipe. Tote: £2.00; £1.40, £1.90, £8.50 DF £2.90. Trio: £41.50 CSF: £6.55.

1.20 (2m 3f ch) 1, Fenwick (T Dascombe, 11-1); 2, Cooiree (20-1), 3, Take By Storm (9-4 fav) 12 ran. ½l, nk. R Hodges. Tote £9.40; £2.90, £7.90, £1.50. DF: £50.70. Trio: £335.60. CSF: £182.20. Tricast £612.17.

1.50 (2m 1l hdle) 1, Lucky Eddie (C Maude, 12-1), 2, Garnwin (12-1), 3, Mr Rundle (6-1). Show Faith 2-1 fav 14 ran 1½l, 4l. P Hobbs. Tote. £10.60; £2.60, £3.00, £3.60 DF. £51.00 Trio: £233.40 (part won. pool of £263.02 carried forward to Cheltenham 3.45 today) CSF £142.30

2.20 (3m 110yd hdle) 1, Tour Leader (B Powell, 9-1), 2, Royal Piper (11-4); 3, Special Account (20-1). Lead Vocalist 2-1 fav 9 ran. NR Cool Clown, River Island Hd, 3l R Buckler. Tote £11.10; £2.80, £1.20, £2.40. DF: £10.80 Trio: £39.00 CSF: £31.28 Tricast £436.20.

2.50 (3m ch) 1, Certain Angle (C Maude, 9-4 fav); 2, Scotoni (33-1), 3, Alice Smith (9-1) 11 ran. 3l, 15l P Hobbs Tote: £3.40, £2.10, £4.60, £2.70 DF: £35.10. Trio: £127.20. CSF: £61.42 Tricast: £535.20.

3.20 (2m 1f hdle) 1, The Caumrue (A P McCoy, 7-2), 2, Sports View (15-8 fav), 3, Nordic Valley (9-2) 6 ran. Sh hd, 9l. G Balding. Tote: £4.60; £2.80, £1.70. DF: £4.60. CSF: £10.18.

Jackpot: not won (pool of £101,894.50 carried forward to Cheltenham today).

Placepot: £749.50.

Quadpot: £20.40 (0.1 winning tickets. Pool of £24.93 carried forward to Cheltenham today).

Nottingham

Going: good (chase course); good to soft (hurdles)

12.30 (2m 5f 110yd hdle) 1, Barryben (R Massey, 7-2); 2, Trevveethan (11-2), 3, Its Grand (10-1) Wald 9-4 fav 7 ran 2½l, 3l W Brisbourne Tote £4.80; £2.80, £2.20 DF £18.00 CSF £21.66

1.00 (2m hdle) 1, Mill Thyme (G Lee, 5-1 jt-fav); 2, Dally Boy (8-1); 3, Wisdom (7-1) Nordic Breeze 5-1 jt-fav 25 ran 1½l, 3½l. Mrs M Reveley Tote: £5.10; £2.00, £3.90, £4.00. DF: £20.20 Trio: £18.10 CSF: £53.78.

1.30 (3m 3f 110yd ch) 1, Stunning Stuff (R Johnson, 33-1), 2, Columcille (15-8 fav); 3, Paper Star (7-1) 7 ran Dist, dist T George Tote £26.00; £4.20, £1.50 DF £30.00 CSF £88.18

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: BELL STAFFBOY
(3.45 Cheltenham)
Next best: Danjing
(2.00 Cheltenham)

2.00 (2m hdle) 1, Castle Sweep (P Niven, 4-7 fav); 2, Keep It Zipped (100-30), 3, Macgeorge (20-1), 12 ran NR: Zitas Son. 5l, 5l. D Nicholson. Tote £1.60; £1.00, £1.40, £4.80 DF: £1.60. Trio £29.50 CSF: £3.73

2.30 (2m hdle) 1, Fox Sparrow (A S Smith, 7-1); 2, Zaaloon (2-1), 3, Suvez (3-1) Keep Your Distance 6-4 fav 4 ran. NR, Saint Ciel. 8l, 2l N Tinkler Tote £6.80 DF £9.00. CSF: £19.19.

3.00 (2m ch) 1, Ask Tom (R Garritty, 5-1); 2, Negobelia (10-1); 3, Callisoe Bay (1-5 fav), 4 ran Dist, dist. T Tate. Tote £4.30 DF: £12.60. CSF £31.18

3.30 (2m flat) 1, St Mellion Drive (D Burrows, 5-2 fav); 2, Euphonic Illusion (7-2); 3, Riding Crop (11-2) 13 ran NR: Supreme Norman. ¾l, nk. M Pipe Tote £2.00; £1.00, £1.80, £2.70. DF: £10.10 Trio £35.70. CSF £13.24.

Placepot: £4,879.60.

Quadpot: £20.70 (0.25 winning tickets. Pool of £21.00 carried forward to Cheltenham today).

Fakenham

Going: good

12.10 (2m hdle) 1, Prophets Honour (M Foster, 7-2), 2, Cyrus The Great (15-8 fav); 3, King Of Babylon (7-2) 9 ran 15l, 10l. P Haslam. Tote: £3.80; £1.40, £2.30, £2.10 DF. £4.00 Trio: £9.90. CSF: £11.05

12.40 (2m hdle) 1, Sailsong (R Dunwoody, 9-4 fav), 2, Lucy Tufty (9-2); 3, Fierce (7-1) 12 ran. NR: Pair Of Jacks. 3l, nk. John Whyte. Tote: £2.90; £1.10, £1.90, £1.90 DF: £4.30 Trio £11.10 CSF £12.10 Tricast £55.76

1.10 (2m hdle) 1, Last Spin (R Supple, 6-1), 2, Battleship Bruce (2-1 fav); 3, Cut On A Promise (11-4). 9 ran Nk, 1½l J Jenkins Tote £5.60; £2.40, £1.50, £1.50 DF, £7.10. Trio £26.60. CSF: £18.40

1.40 (3m 110yd ch) 1, Maneree (J F Titley, 11-10 fav), 2, Hurryup (3-1), 3, Victory Anthem (14-1) 6 ran. 12l, 1½l N Callaghan Tote: £3.10; £2.50, £1.60. DF £3.20 CSF: £5.13

2.10 (2m 110yd ch) 1, Driving Force (J F Titley, 13-8); 2, Dr Rocket (6-5 fav); 3, Pusey Street Boy (8-1). 4 ran 2l, 10l Mrs M McCourt. Tote £2.50 DF £1.10 CSF £3.64

2.40 (2m 5l 110yd ch) 1, Artic Wings (M Brennan, 11-10 fav), 2, Prize Match (9-4); 3, Adare Queen (3-1). 4 ran 6l, 9l O Brennan. Tote: £1.50 DF: £2.00. CSF: £3.63.

3.10 (2m 4f hdle) 1, Viceroy Ruler (D Walsh, 9-4 jt-fav); 2, Pyramis Prince (12-1); 3, Britannia Mills (6-1). Can Can Charlie 9-4 jt-fav. 8 ran. 7l, ¾l J Jenkins. Tote: £4.70; £1.10, £1.60, £2.10 DF: £14.10 CSF: £27.32 Tricast £136.89.

Placepot: £13.20.

Quadpot: £18.30 (0.7 winning tickets. Pool of £7.44 carried forward to Cheltenham today).

CHELTENHAM

THUNDERER

12.20 SHANKAR (nap)
12.55 Fourth In Line
1.30 Honest Word
2.00 Danjing
2.35 Edimbourg
3.10 Seven Towers
3.45 Jathib

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating:
1.30 ASK THE GOVERNOR.

GOING: GOOD SIS

12.20 CHELTENHAM SPONSORSHIP CLUB NOVICES HURDLE

(£3,745: 2m 1f) (13 runners)

101 F422-1 SHANKAR 13 (S) (International Plywood) D Nicholson 4-11-10 W Marston [illegible]
102 11-215 EXTERIOR PROFILES 13 (F,G) (Exterior Profiles) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-7 C Maude 82
103 603-01 FLYING INSTRUCTOR 20 (F) (Lady Lyell) P Webber 5-11-7 R Bellamy 58
104 1-1 ZEPHYRUS 22 (G) (E & W Robins) O Sherwood 5-11-7 J Osborne 74
105 BRIGHT NOVEMBER 446F (T Parrott) Mrs H Parrott 4-11-3 S Curran (3) –
106 00-3 EL FREDDIE 16 (Mrs A Smith) J Old 5-11-3 T Grantham 66
107 000- FITZGANDHI 280 (Mrs M Wilson) A J Wilson 6-11-3 T Jenks –
108 GRANBY BELL 32F (H Walton) P Hayward 4-11-3 Peter Hobbs –
109 40/0401- KIMANICKY 225 (G) (Mrs E Baines) N Henderson 5-11-3 M A Fitzgerald –
110 P- LASHAM LAD 371 (Mrs S Addington-Smith) J Gifford 6-11-3 P Hide –
111 /02333/ MR JERVIS 597 (Felix Rosenstiel's Widow & Son) J Gifford 6-11-3 B Powell –
112 404/0-53 SCARLET RAMBLER 13 (E Partnership) N Twiston-Davies 6-11-3 C Llewellyn 80
113 0/06034- HYDEMILLA 209 (Mrs T Pilkington) Mrs T Pilkington 5-10-12 G Hogan (3) 54

BETTING: 5-4 Shankar, 3-1 Zephyrus, 9-2 Exterior Profiles, 8-1 Scarlet Rambler, 12-1 Kimanicky, 14-1 El Freddie, Mr Jervis, 16-1 others.

1994: SIMPLE ARITHMETIC 6-11-4 N Williamson (2-1) K Bailey 13 ran

FORM FOCUS

SHANKAR beat Flight Lieutenant ¾l in 13-runner novice hurdle at Newbury (3m 110yd, heavy) with SCARLET RAMBLER (7lb better off) 4l 3rd. EXTERIOR PROFILES beat Jet Boys 10l in 9-runner novice hurdle at Kempton (2m, good) on penultimate start. FLYING INSTRUCTOR beat Ice Cold In Alex 15l in 8-runner novice hurdle at Nottingham (2m, good to firm). ZEPHYRUS beat Inculcate 2l in 16-runner novice hurdle at Warwick (2m, good) with SCARLET RAMBLER (4lb better off) 10½l 5th. KIMANICKY beat Madison County 3l in National Hunt Flat race at Punchestown (2m, good). MR JERVIS 8½l 3rd of 15 to Gospel in grade III Novice Hurdle Final Handicap at Cheltenham (2m 4f, good to firm).
Selection: EXTERIOR PROFILES

12.55 SOUTHAM HANDICAP HURDLE

(£3,534: 2m 1f) (10 runners)

201 5110-02 CADOUGOLD 22 (F,G,S) (D Johnson) M Pipe 4-11-10 D Bridgwater [illegible]
202 0/1121-4 FOURTH IN LINE 13 (CD,G,S) (Mrs G Jenkinson) J Edwards 7-11-7 P Niven 89
203 14/5/61- SABAKI RIVER 228 (CD,F,G,S) (Mrs B Taylor) Mrs J Retter 11-11-6 J Osborne 97
204 411110- MARINER'S AIR 231 (G,S) (Mrs P Badger) J Spearing 8-11-5 R Johnson (5) 97
205 216-P DINO MALTA 37 (BF,S) (Lady Harris) D Nicholson 4-11-3 W Marston –
206 1/31FP-1 CHERYL'S LAD 17 (D,F,S) (Mrs E Barnes) N Henderson 5-11-2 M A Fitzgerald 95
207 4U1004- SUPREME MASTER 253 (S) (T Johnsey) Miss C Johnsey 5-10-10 D Gallagher 80
208 641013 SOUTHAMPTON 14 (V,C,D,F,G,S) (Highflyers) G Balding 5-10-7 A P McCoy 96
209 11446-2 MORSTOCK 43 (G) (Mrs M Fairbairn) R Hodges 5-10-7 T Dascombe (5) 97
210 04012-B KING'S CROSS 14 (S) (N Harvey) A J Wilson 6-10-1 C Llewellyn 88

BETTING: 5-2 Cheryl's Lad, 5-1 Sabaki River, 6-1 Cadougold, 7-1 Mariner's Air, Fourth In Line, 8-1 Supreme Master, 10-1 Southampton, 12-1 others.

1994: MISTER DRUM 5-10-13 G McCourt (25-1) M Wilkinson 14 ran

FORM FOCUS

CADOUGOLD 6l 2nd of 6 to Lightening Lad in handicap hurdle at Wincanton (2m, good). FOURTH IN LINE beat Freddie Mock 15l in 21-runner handicap hurdle over course and distance (heavy) on penultimate start with MORSTOCK (14lb better off) 6½l 4th. SABAKI RIVER beat Jonjas Chudleigh 3l in 6-runner handicap hurdle at Chepstow (2m 110yd, good) with SOUTHAMPTON (3lb better off) pulled up. MARINERS AIR beat Vasiliev 8l in 7-runner handicap hurdle at Nottingham (2m, good) on penultimate start. CHERYL'S LAD beat How's It Goin 3l in 8-runner handicap hurdle at Huntingdon (2m 110yd, good to firm). MORSTOCK ¾l 2nd of 14 to Silver Standard in handicap hurdle at Stratford (2m 6f 110yd, good)
Selection: MORSTOCK

Blinkered first time

DONCASTER: 12.15 Baroski, See You Again. 12.50 Brackenthwaite. 1.20 Bas De Laine. HEXHAM: 12.25 Dawn Rock.

1.30 CHUBB FIRE CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP CHASE (£4,221: 2m 5f) (10 runners)

301 066200- NEVADA GOLD 237 (CD,F,G,S) (Maltsword Ltd) F Yardley 9-12-0 P McLoughlin 91
302 F0212-3 HONEST WORD 15 (F,G,S) (Mrs H Clarke) S Brookshaw 10-11-11 R Johnson 87
303 4111/32 STRONG MEDICINE 15 (D,F,G) (D Sills) K Bailey 8-11-8 T J Murphy 90
304 F3114-1 FILE CONCORD 16 (D,G,S) (Jat Stationery) Mrs J Pitman 11-11-7 G Hogan 92
305 11/50-55 KILLESHIN 8 (G,S) (H Manners) H Manners 9-11-5 D Walsh –
306 22212-P JAILBREAKER 24 (G,S) (Mrs G Willman) B Millman 8-11-3 D Salter 88
307 3-11353 MUTUAL TRUST 34 (D,F,G,S) (M Bowring) P Hobbs 11-11-1 G Tormey 92
308 P404-12 ASK THE GOVERNOR 8 (F,G,S) (Mrs D Claessen-Brereton) G Balding 9-10-6 B Fenton [illegible]
309 PPF-P53 MAN OF MYSTERY 14 (B,G,S) N Twiston-Davies 9-10-2 S Joynes (5) 91
310 F0/1-23P JIM VALENTINE 11 (D,F,S) (R L Barnes) C Broad 9-10-0 D Leahy 88

Long handicap: Jim Valentine 9-6

BETTING: 2-1 File Concord, 7-2 Ask The Governor, 5-1 Mutual Trust, 7-1 Strong Medicine, 8-1 Honest Word, 10-1 Jailbreaker, 12-1 others.

1994: WELL BRIEFED 7-10-11 A P McCoy (7-2) R Buckler 6 ran

FORM FOCUS

NEVADA GOLD best recent effort 6l 2nd of 10 to Melaagris in handicap chase at Doncaster (3m 2f, good). HONEST WORD 1l 2nd of 16 to Hermes Harvest in amateurs hunter chase at Stratford (3m 4f, good) on penultimate start. STRONG MEDICINE 3½l 2nd of 4 to Smith's Band in handicap chase at Uttoxeter (2m 7f, good) with HONEST WORD 3l 3rd. FILE CONCORD beat Really A Rascal 3l in 9-runner handicap chase at Chepstow (2m 3f 110yd, good to soft). JAILBREAKER 3l 2nd of 7 to Duhallow Lodge in handicap chase at Towcester (2m 110yd, heavy) on penultimate start. MUTUAL TRUST head and 1½l 3rd of 6 to Tug Of Peace in handicap chase at Wincanton (3m 1f 110yd, good to firm). ASK THE GOVERNOR head 2nd of 6 to Royal Square in amateurs handicap chase at Windsor (2m 5f, good).
Selection: HONEST WORD

2.00 MILLION IN MIND NOVICES HURDLE

C4

(3-Y-O: £3,708: 2m 1f) (14 runners)

401 2111 ELATION 13 (D,F,G) (R Tyrer) G Richards 11-7 B Harding (3) 95
402 15 EXECUTIVE DESIGN 13 (BF,G) (W Stewson) Mrs M Reveley 11-7 P Niven 88
403 01531 OCEAN HAWK 8 (F,S) (Miss J Broadhurst) N Twiston-Davies 11-7 C Llewellyn 90
404 1 OUR KRIS 14 (G) (Million In Mind) N Henderson 11-7 M A Fitzgerald 96
405 21 CHICODARI 26 (C,S) (C Harvey) D Nicholson 11-3 W Marston 98
406 12 KIPPANOUR 51 (G) (M Watt) C Mann 11-3 A P McCoy –
407 0 BERKELEY BOUNDER 27 (R Hilley) R McKellar 11-0 C Maude 70
408 2 DANJING 20 (R Green Fine Paintings) S Sherwood 11-0 J Osborne [illegible]
409 DECEIT THE SECOND 32F (E Wey) P Rodford 11-0 S Burrough –
410 DOMAPPEL 50F (M Banks) Mrs J Cecil 11-0 T Kent –
411 DTOTO 60F (B Jones) R Baker 11-0 B Powell –
412 4 FORESTAL 26 (S Griffiths) S Griffiths 11-0 Mr J Jukes 77
413 F PACIFIC OVERTURE 14 (Dragon Industrial Services) C Barwell 10-9 B Clifford –
414 SPARKLING YASMIN (V Palmer) P Hobbs 10-9 Peter Hobbs –

BETTING: 5-2 Our Kris, 9-2 Danjing, 5-1 Chicodari, 7-1 Elation, 8-1 Ocean Hawk, Executive Design, 16-1 others.

1994: SILVER WEDGE 11-7 A Maguire (13-8) D Nicholson 11 ran

FORM FOCUS

ELATION beat Done Well 1l in 24-runner novice hurdle at Newcastle (2m, good) with EXECUTIVE DESIGN (6lb worse off) 12l 5th. EXECUTIVE DESIGN beat Woodrising 2½l in 14-runner novice hurdle at Newbury (2m 110yd, good). OCEAN HAWK beat Pedaltothemetal 6l in 18-runner novice hurdle at Leicester (2m, soft). OUR KRIS beat Tibetan 3l in novice hurdle at Newbury (2m 110yd, good). CHICODARI short head 2nd (awarded race) to Talk Back in novice hurdle over course and distance (good to soft). KIPPANOUR neck 2nd of 7 to Mister Chippy in hurdle at Navan (2m, good). DANJING 1½l 2nd of 13 to Paddy's Return in novice hurdle at Ascot (2m 110yd, good) with OCEAN HAWK (3lb worse off) 6l 3rd.
Selection: DANJING (nap)

2.35 ASTEC HANDICAP CHASE

C4

(£10,553: 3m 1f 110yd) (7 runners)

501 1R21PF- LUSTY LIGHT 244 (C,D,F,G,S) (B Burrough) Mrs J Pitman 9-11-10 W Marston 90
502 1121-U3 UNHOLY ALLIANCE 17 (D,F,G,S) (Mrs S Nelson) K Bailey 8-10-10 M A Fitzgerald 95
503 111/12-4 GHIA GNEUIAGH 13 (D,BF,F,G,S) (Miss S Scott) N Twiston-Davies 9-10-3 C Llewellyn 95
504 U13U56- DONT TELL THE WIFE 225 (C,G,S) (Elite Racing) C Egerton 9-10-0 J Osborne 96
505 PP/1121- EDIMBOURG 223 (F,G,S) (Mrs I Winton) Miss H Knight 9-10-0 J F Titley 95
506 5512-31 RUN UP THE FLAG 20 (D,F,G,S) (Pell-Mell Partners) J Gifford 8-10-0 P Hide [illegible]
507 3/1P156- YORKSHIRE GALE 258 (G,S) (B Naylor) J Gifford 9-10-0 A P McCoy 90

Long handicap: Dont Tell The Wife 9-13, Edimbourg 9-13, Run Up The Flag 9-12, Yorkshire Gale 9-10.

BETTING: 9-4 Run Up The Flag, 7-2 Lusty Light, 4-1 Edimbourg, 9-2 Unholy Alliance, 7-1 Ghia Gneuiagh, 10-1 Yorkshire Gale, 14-1 Dont Tell The Wife.

1994: WHISPERING STEEL 8-11-10 N Williamson (100-30) K Bailey 7 ran

FORM FOCUS

LUSTY LIGHT beat Bradbury Star distance in chase at Wincanton (2m 5f, good). UNHOLY ALLIANCE 10l 3rd of 7 to Dextra Dove in handicap Chase over course and distance (good). GHIA GNEUIAGH beat Charlotte's Emma 7l in handicap chase at Perth (3m, good). EDIMBOURG beat Gallateen 6l in 13-runner handicap chase at Worcester (2m 7f, good). RUN UP THE FLAG beat Auto Pilot 1½l in 6-runner handicap chase at Ascot (3m 110yd, good). YORKSHIRE GALE best recent effort beat Spikey 7l in chase at Sandown (3m 110yd, good).
Selection: UNHOLY ALLIANCE

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

1tn 113143 GOOD TIMES 13 (BF,F,G,S) (Mrs D Robinson) B Hall 12-0 B West (7) 88

Racecard number. Six-figure form (F — fell. P — pulled up. U — unseated rider. B — brought down. S — slipped up. R — refused. D — disqualified). Horse's name. Days since last outing. F if flat. (B — blinkers. V — visor. H — hood. E — Eyeshield. C — course winner. D — distance winner. CD — course and distance winner. BF — beaten favourite in latest race) Going on which horse has won (F — firm, good to firm, hard. G — good. S — soft, good to soft, heavy) Owner in brackets. Trainer. Age and weight. Rider plus any allowance. The Times Private Handicapper's rating.

3.10 CHRIS COLEY RACING NOVICES CHASE

C4

(£4,856: 3m 1f 110yd) (5 runners)

601 5335-41 CROPREDY LAD 30 (F) (R Hall) P Webber 8-11-8 G McCourt 86
602 214P-42 HIGHWAY FIVE 9 (D,G) (Lady Brooke) Lady Brooke 7-11-8 R Johnson 59
603 21P/51-1 SEVEN TOWERS 13 (G,S) (Mrs E Murray) Mrs M Reveley 6-11-8 P Niven [illegible]
604 2340-F3 MOBILE MESSENGER 10 (S) (A Dean) T George 7-11-4 M A Fitzgerald 64
605 P35/632 GRAND APPLAUSE 15 (G) (M Lewin) M Muggeridge 5-11-3 B Powell 65

BETTING: 4-11 Seven Towers, 100-30 Cropredy Lad, 15-2 Highway Five, 12-1 Mobile Messenger, 16-1 Grand Applause.

1994: TOP BRASS 6-10-12 N Williamson (5-1) K Bailey 5 ran

FORM FOCUS

CROPREDY LAD beat Fast Run 1½l in 5-runner novice handicap hurdle at Newbury (3m, good to firm). HIGHWAY FIVE 15l 2nd of 11 to Canloris Frater in novice handicap hurdle at Hereford (3m 1f 110yd, good to soft). SEVEN TOWERS beat McGregor The Third in 6-runner novice chase at Newcastle (2m 4f, good). MOBILE MESSENGER 12½l 3rd of 10 to Beaurepaire in novice chase at Fontwell (3m 2f 110yd, soft) GRAND APPLAUSE 1½l 2nd of 8 to Secret Four in handicap hurdle at Taunton (3m 3f 110yd, good).
Selection: SEVEN TOWERS

3.45 ASW BILL LOVE MEMORIAL GOLD CARD HANDICAP HURDLE (£5,639: 3m 110yd) (14 runners)

C4

1 12/54P4- SWEET GLOW 50F (CD,F,G,S) (Mrs M Fairbrother) M Pipe 8-11-10 D Bridgwater 90
2 /11P/11 BETTER TIMES AHEAD 14 (D,G,S) (E Briggs) G Richards 9-11-1 B Harding (3) 97
3 221FP-2 GILLAN COVE 27 (D,S) (Forum Racing) R Alner 6-10-12 Mr P Henley (5) 90
4 11400-5 TRICKLE LAD 27 (D,F,G,S) (Mrs H Prendergast) F Murphy 6-10-10 A P McCoy 92
5 F303-F1 BELL STAFFBOY 13 (F,G) (K Bell & Son Ltd) C Broad 6-10-10 W Marston 94
6 15111/P SEE ENOUGH 16 (D,S) (J Meaden) R Buckler 7-10-0 A Tory –
7 1-13224 JATHIB 37 (D,BF,F,G) (Horses For Courses) D Nicholson 4-10-0 R Johnson (5) 89
8 312/4-23 VICTOR BRAVO 30 (CD,BF,F,G) (Mrs R Cowell) N Gaselee 8-10-0 C Llewellyn 80
9 1333-11 WEE WINDY 26 (D,F,G,S) (W Gale) J Gifford 6-10-0 P Hide [illegible]
10 53221-3 IMAD 30 (G,S) (A Brackley) J White 5-10-0 D Gallagher 82
11 544F0-1 ULURU 28 (D,F,G) (P Morgan) C Nash 7-10-0 J R Kavanagh 77
12 03U020- STAR MOVER 247 (G,S) (Julian Graves) C Smith 6-10-0 B Clarke (7) 72
13 F20/00-P JIMBALOU 16 (F,G,S) (R Brazington) R Brazington 12-10-0 W Humphreys 68
14 61P-P40 SNICKERSNEE 7 (F) (P Farrell) P Farrell 7-10-0 M Foster 50

Long handicap: Jathib 9-13, Victor Bravo 9-10, Wee Windy 9-8, Imad 9-7, Uluru 9-7, Star Mover 8-9, Jimbalou 7-12, Snickersnee 6-6.

BETTING: 9-2 Wee Windy, 5-1 Gillan Cove, 6-1 Better Times Ahead, 8-1 Sweet Glow, Bell Staffboy, Jathib, 10-1 Uluru, 12-1 others.

1994: CYBORGO 4-11-8 R Dunwoody (7-1) M Pipe 13 ran

FORM FOCUS

SWEET GLOW 18¾l 4th of 6 to Cab On Target in hurdle at Ascot (3m, firm). BETTER TIMES AHEAD beat Master Boston 11l in 4-runner handicap chase at Bangor (2m 4f 110yd, good). GILLAN COVE 1l 2nd of 6 to Greenhill Tare Away in handicap hurdle here (3m 2f, good) with TRICKLE LAD (4lb better off) 15l 5th. TRICKLE LAD 13l 7th of 21 to Putty Road in Sun Alliance novice hurdle here (2m 5f, soft). BELL STAFFBOY beat Celibate 1l in 5-runner handicap hurdle at Warwick (2m 4f 110yd, good) JATHIB 1l 2nd of 5 to Great Marquess in handicap hurdle at Newbury (3m 110yd, good) on penultimate start. WEE WINDY beat Time For A Flutter 15l in 6-runner handicap hurdle at Fontwell (2m 6f, good to firm). IMAD beat Father O'Brien 7l in 7-runner novice hurdle at Cartmel (3m 2f, good) on penultimate start.
Selection: TRICKLE LAD

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rnrs	%	JOCKEYS	Winners	Rides	%
K Bailey	22	86	25.6	A Tory	10	25	40.0
D Nicholson	36	166	21.7	A P McCoy	8	34	23.5
O Sherwood	11	68	16.2	Richard Guest	6	39	15.4
N Twiston-Davies	32	199	16.1	J Osborne	23	155	14.8
J Gifford	19	120	15.8	W Marston	12	83	14.5
C Egerton	3	19	15.8	G McCourt	11	85	12.9

☐ Sheikh Mohammed has bought two new sets of racing colours — plain khaki and cerise with a grey cap. He will, however, keep his maroon and white silks as first choice.

Hexham off

THE meeting at Hexham today has been called off because of snow on the track. Charles Enderby, the clerk of the course, said: "There is a covering of snow and sub-zero temperatures." At Doncaster, where there is a 7.30 inspection, prospects are "75-25 in favour of racing".

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9/2 Unholy Alliance
7/1 Ghia Gneuiagh
10/1 Yorkshire Gale
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Happiness is a winner and noodle soup

FREUD ON FRIDAY

Happy Valley racecourse in Hong Kong must be one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in the world. Nearby, a newly-constructed office block is selling for £600 a square foot; Happy Valley extends to 40 acres.

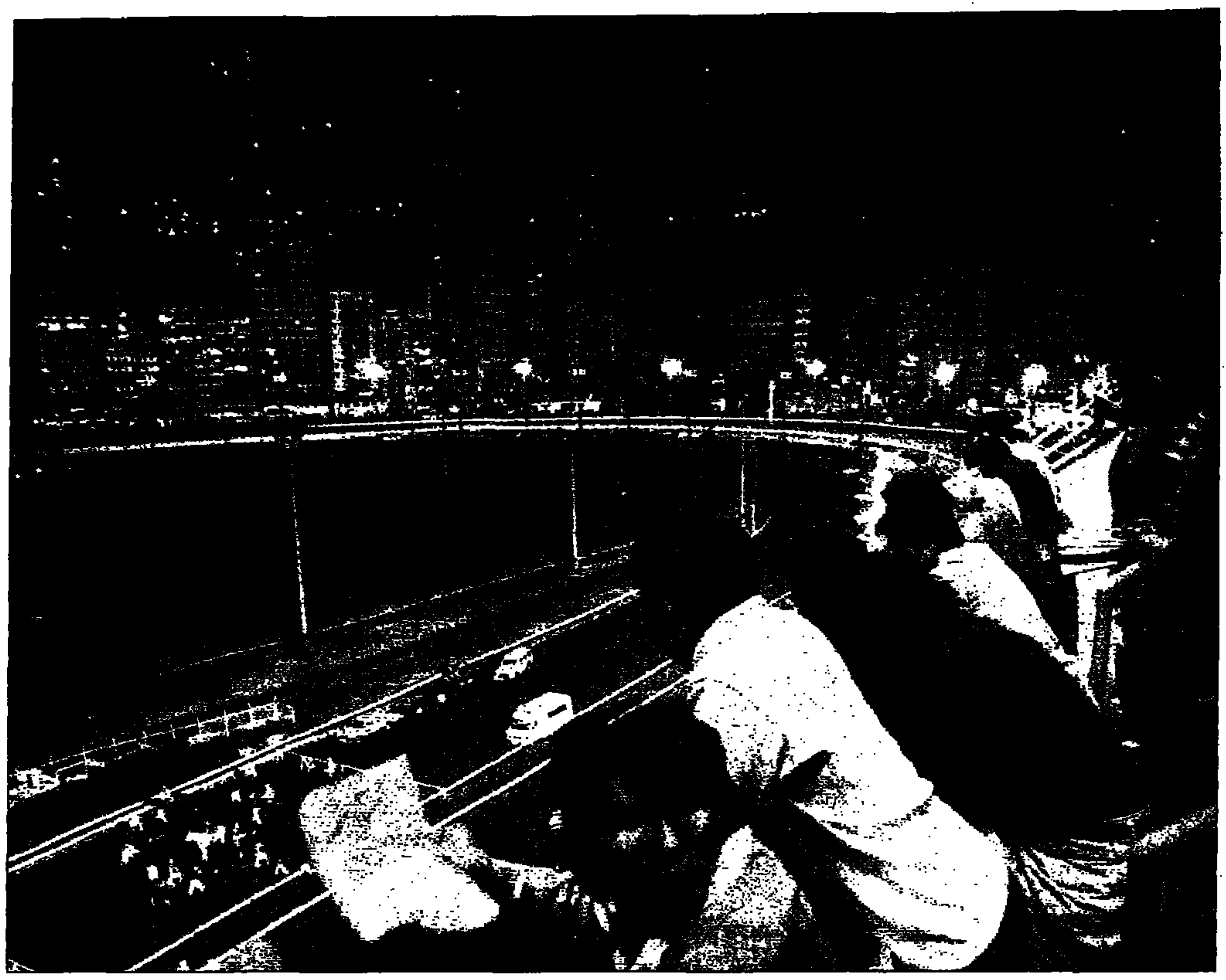
There is a seven-furlong circuit, 500 yards of eight-storey stand, restaurants, boxes and private rooms seating 4,850 diners ... and, for the 32,000 punters who were there on Wednesday evening, the additional incentive (not that there is great need for incentive) of a £3 million carry-over on the Tierce pool — a figure that rose by £500,000 as nobody won it again.

In England, racecourses go to great lengths to woo the young; the racegoers of tomorrow, seed-corn of the sport. They offer free entrance, irresistible bargains, bouncy castles, whatever. In Hong Kong, nobody under the age of 18 is admitted; just like that. To say that the Chinese are passionate about gambling is an understatement, but they are also knowledgeable; individual bets on the first race were less significant than those on successive events — because racegoers wanted to see how horses coped with the going. "Good to firm," had been posted; firm to firm is what it looked like; jockeys reported the ground to be solid.

International races attract smaller bets because the horses are not known to the locals and the crowd is sporting: when one of the two girl jockeys riding here won the big race on a 50-1 shot, there was the same warm applause as is accorded others.

Those of us who feel that racing needs bookmakers to provide colour and an alternative market will have to reconsider that stance. Hong Kong has a Tote monopoly and it works like a dream. Eighty two per cent of the turnover goes back to the betters yet the Government's cut of ten per cent of the tally helps to keep basic rate income tax at 15 per cent; the balance plus catering profits has just paid for an £85 million refit — what they got would have cost three times that sum in England and have taken four or five times as long.

The absence of bookmakers is also a disincentive to villainy.



Eager punters, their money down, wait for the floodlit action to get under way at Happy Valley. Photograph: George Selwyn

There is a story of a three-horse *race in which the runners* were priced at 4-5, even money and 6-1.

A man approached a bookmaker and had a large bet on the outsider ... who won.

When the bookmaker paid out he said to the punter: "You are very lucky."

Not lucky, said the punter.

Lucky, said the bookmaker; I own *that winner*.

Not lucky, said the punter; I own the other two.

No doubt about it, racing is big. On race days, about twice a week for nine months in the year, all of the 29 daily papers have racing sections or separate supplements and there is none of that well-bred "I go because I like the sight of galloping horses" stuff. They go to bet. They understand the Totalisator's electronic boards, the Quinella and the Tierce pools. They also come to eat and *drink — catering turnover is £36* million per annum — with about one third of the food being Chinese. Men walk about spooning noodle soup into themselves; there is little drunkeness, no graffiti (could be difficult in Chinese characters) and the crowd is genuinely well behaved.

When the local Chinese population wanted to hold a protest meeting after Tiananmen Square, the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club gave the use of Happy Valley, provided the mess was cleared up. An estimated 100,000 protesters came ... and when they left not one sweet paper or cigarette packet lay on the ground.

Entrance to the Members' Enclo*sure costs under £5 ... the "in-field"* entrance is 50p. No race is worth less than £20,000 to the winner, there are huge colour screens for all to see the action and a multitude of screens in every room, on every floor, by every Totalisator window. Upwards of a thousand staff means no queues *neither if you want* a drink or a bet and the operators who take your money have only limited English but wish you "Good Ruck", which is more than our Tote ladies do at home.

Moreover it is all handsome; marble halls, tiled floors, colourful greenery and flowers wherever you look, nice folksy pre-race summaries: "This *three-year-old customer is a likely danger with good late speed* and a favourable draw." If you are fortunate to be in the right place, there is also a captivating race commentary in Chinese and in some of the boxes sit family parties whose average age is 90. As Christmas is coming, there is appropriate music: I recognised *Ludolph the Led-Nose Leindeer.*

I was intending to mention that they get their l's and r's as wrong as I get my winners but, in race five, I backed a 'horse because its jockey wore silks that were close to my own colours ... and collected a five-figure sum in Hong Kong dollars, which is still just four figures in sterling. I will therefore be able to add to my collection of suits from Mr Sam the tailor: one of the fastest men in town; order at 11am and the first fitting is at tea-time.

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Douglas is captain for Hastings battle

By Richard Eaton

DESMOND DOUGLAS, the most successful English table tennis player since the 1950s, is making another international comeback. The former European Top 12 champion is taking over as non-playing captain for the first time in the European League match against Germany at Hastings on Tuesday. England must win if they are to avoid a relegation play-off.

Douglas made a surprise playing comeback for England at the world championships earlier this year and, at the age of 40, has been asked to play for his country again since. However, although he still plays in the French League, he prefers a behind-the-scenes role for England, which his supporters in the English Table Tennis Association hope could become permanent.

"It's too soon to say about taking the job in the long-term," Douglas said. "I came out of retirement to play this year because of a request from people I respect and I'm doing the same now. I'm still a professional and hope to continue to be for some time."

A great deal may depend on how much of a success Douglas can make of his new role. He is universally respected by fellow players, has performed outstandingly over a long period of time as a coach at England training camps, but has little experience as an international court-side coach. The job on Tuesday will be particularly tough. Germany have not won a match this season but still have Jorg Rosskopf, the world No 6 and former European champion, in their squad.

Douglas: new role

The women's team, who have an equally tough task in a European League semi-final against Germany at the same venue on the same night, will be captained by Jill Hammersley-Parker, who is returning to the role after an 18-month absence.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page *40*

SCALLOPINI

(c) A dish consisting of very thin slices of meat (especially veal) sautéed or fried. From the Italian diminutive of *scaloppa* an escalope. "Sal Moroni got arrested for throwing a Sicilian cook out of the window of an Italian restaurant for overcooking his scaloppini."

PSEUDERY

(c) An affected or pompous manner of expression, usually with intellectual pretensions, or an example of this. From the Greek *pseudos* a lie. Popularised by *Pseuds' Corner* in *Private Eye*. "Best of all is Mr Ward's pithy dismissal of the sort of supernatural pseudery that has enthralled the credulous since the beginning of time."

RAFIK

(a) In Arabia, a companion or escort, an adaptation and transliteration of the Arabic word. "The one thing needful is a rafik, ie a companion derived from the tribe through whose range one must pass, or from some tribe allied with it or authorised to share its range."

RITUALIA

(c) Objects used in or connected with religious rites and ceremonies. The plural of the Latin *rituâle* relating to rites or ceremonies. "The records of this synagogue may contain papers of great interest, and its ritualia certainly include objects of considerable beauty."

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1 ... Qxf2+! 2 Rxf2 Re1+ 3 Rf1 Bh2+ 4 Kh1 Rxf1 mate.

A black and white view

Print the Legend. *Radio 4 FM, 10.00am.*

If there is one film that encapsulates the patronising nature of colonial cinema in the 1930s, it is *Sanders of the River*, set in Africa. British District Commissioner Sanders is talking to the natives about his temporary replacement: "I want you to obey him as if you were his own children," he says. In his fourth programme about how the cinema has portrayed history, Christopher Frayling concentrates on the adventure films in which, except for Paul Robeson and Gunga Din (the latter played by a white actor wearing dark makeup), the goodies all had white faces and the baddies brown or black faces. Looking back on these films of empire, he says, is like having a bad dream. Ethnologically, he is probably right. But what thundering good entertainment they provided.

The Classic Serial: Barnaby Rudge. *Radio 4, 2.00pm.*

There is a lot of scene-setting, plot charting and character building in episode one of Elizabeth Proud's adaptation of Dickens's historical novel. And there is a lot more to be done. Still to come: the shrewish servant Miss Miggs, the religious zealot Lord George Gordon, the 1780 "No Popery!" riots he masterminded, and the unmasking of the scar-faced stranger who strikes terror in the heart of poor Barnaby's mother. *All the performances are up to Dickens-on-radio standard,* especially Cathy Sara's Dolly Varden. I nearly caught a cold listening to Malcolm McKee's chilly music.

Peter Davalle

RADIO 1

FM Stereo. **4.00am** Clive Warren **6.30** Chris Evans **9.00** Simon Mayo **12.00** Lisa I'Anson, incl at **12.30-12.45pm** Newsbeat and at **1.15** The Net **2.00** Nicky Campbell **4.00** Mark Goodier, incl at **5.30-5.45** Newsbeat; at **6.15** The Net and at **6.30** The Mix **7.00** The Essential Selection **10.00** John Peel **1.00am** Radio 1 Rap Show

RADIO 2

FM Stereo. **6.00am** Sarah Kennedy **7.30** Wogan **9.30** Ken Bruce, incl at **10.00** Pick of the Hits **11.30** Jimmy Young **2.00pm** Debbie Thrower **3.30** Ed Stewart **5.05** John Dunn **7.00** Today's the Day **7.30** Friday Night is Music Night **9.30** Listen to the Band: Enfield Citadel Band of the Salvation Army **10.00** The People's Arts **12.05am** Digby Fairweather **1.00** Sue McGarry

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports **6.00** The Breakfast Programme, incl at **6.55** and **7.55** Racing Preview **8.35** The Magazine, incl Euronews and at **11.00** News; Chain Reaction **12.00** Midday with Mair, incl at **12.34pm** Moneycheck; and at ***1.15*** *Entertainment News* ***2.05*** *Ruscoe* on Five, incl at **3.45** Entertainment News **4.00** Nationwide, incl at **5.45** Entertainment News **7.00** News Extra, incl at **7.20** sport **7.35** Parkinson on Sport **9.05** American Graffiti **9.35** Stop Press **10.05** Entertainment Superhighway **11.00** Night Extra, incl at **11.15** The Financial World Tonight **12.05am** After Hours **2.05** Up All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am *Sandy Warr* ***7.00*** *Simon Bates* **10.00** Jonathan King **12.00** Tommy Boyd **2.00pm** Anna Raeburn **4.00** Scott Chisholm and Lowri Turner **7.00** Sean Bolger **9.00** Moz Dee **10.00** Mike Allen **1.00-6.00am** Ian Collins

WORLD SERVICE

All times in **GMT**. **5.00am** Newsday **5.30** Europe Today **6.00** Newsday **6.30** Europe Today **7.00** World News **7.15** *Middlemarch* **7.30** Heritage **8.00** News **8.10** Words of Faith **8.15** Music Review **9.00** News in German **9.15** Focus on Faith **9.45** Sport **10.00** Newsdesk **10.30** BBC English **10.45** *Middlemarch* **11.00** Newsdesk **11.30** Meridian **12.00** World News **12.05pm** World Business Report **12.15** Britain Today **12.30** Science in Action **1.00** Newshour **2.00** News **2.05** Outlook **2.30** Multitrack: Alternative **3.00** News in German **3.15** Music Review **4.00** World News **4.15** The World Today **4.30** News in German **5.00** Europe Today **5.30** World Business Report **5.45** Sports Roundup **6.00** Newsdesk **6.30** News in German **7.00** News **7.01** Outlook **7.25** Words of Faith **7.30** Multitrack **8.00** Newshour **9.00** News **9.05** World Business Report **9.15** Britain Today **9.30** People and Politics **10.00** Newsdesk **10.30** The World Today **10.45** Sport **11.00** News **11.10** Spotlight **11.15** Heritage **11.45** The Farming World **Midnight** Newsdesk **12.30** From the Weeklies **12.45** Britain Today **1.00** News **1.10** Press Review **1.15** Seven Days **1.30** Jazz **1.45** Good Books **2.00** Newsday **2.30** People and Politics **3.00** News **3.15** Sport **3.30** The Vintage Chart Show **4.00** Newsdesk **4.30** Jazz **4.45** Seven Days

CLASSIC FM

4.00am Mark Griffiths **6.00** Nick Bailey **9.00** Henry Kelly **12.00** Susannah Simons **2.00pm** Concerto **3.00** Jamie Crick **6.00** Newsnight **6.30** Sonata **7.00** Classic Verdict **8.00** Concert **10.00** Michael Mappin **1.00am** Robert Booth

VIRGIN RADIO

6.00am Russ 'n' Jono **9.00** Richard Skinner **12.00** Graham Dene **4.00pm** Nicky Horne **7.30** Paul Coyte **10.00** Mark Forrest **2.00am** Howard Pearce

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air. Rossini (Overture: The Silken Ladder); Stravinsky (Ballet: The Firebird); Purcell (*Sound the trumpet, beat the drum*); Dohnányi (Variations on a Nursery Song); Massé (Ninette est jeune et belle, Carnaval de Venise, la Reine Topaze); Monteverdi (Magnificat a 7, Vespers)

9.00 Morning Collection with Paul Gambaccini. Honegger (Rugby); Beethoven (Violin Sonata in F, Spring); Gade (Symphony No 4 in B flat)

10.00 Musical Encounters, with *Mary Miller. Artist of the Week*: Catherine Bott, soprano. John Clerk of Penicuik (Dic mihi saeve puer); **10.14** Dutilleux (Mystère de l'instant); Strozzi (Lagrime mie); Ravel (L'Enfant et les sortilèges); Schoenberg (String Quartet in D)

12.00 Composer of the Week: Schumann. Orch Saint-Saëns (Abendlied, Op 107 No 6); Schumann (*Fantasiestücke, Op 88*); *orch* Shostakovich (Cello Concerto in A *minor*) (r)

1.00pm Bristol Lunchtime Concert: Bartók Plus. William Dazeley, baritone; Julius Drake, piano. Bartók (Five Songs, Op 16); Liszt (Die drei Zigeuner); Dvořák (Gypsy Songs, Op 55); Kurtag (Three Old Inscriptions, Op 25); Bartók (Three Hungarian Folk Songs)

2.00 *The BBC Orchestras*: BBC Symphony Orchestra under Alexander Lazarev. Tchaikovsky (Manfred Symphony) (r)

3.00 Fairest Isle: Mining the Archive The Emigrés. Music by Matyas Seiber and Andrzej Panufnik

4.20 Fairest Isle: Turns of the Century. *Peter Nichols* celebrates Kenneth Williams

4.30 Music for the Mughal Court: Imrat Khan, sitar, plays the traditional raga *Bilaskhani Todi*, attributed to Bilas Khan

5.00 The Music Machine. Caroline Swinburne travels to Bathurst Island, off Australia's northern coast, to meet the Tiwi people

5.15 In Tune. Holst (St Paul's *Suite); Berlioz (Nocturne for* two voices); Bach (Cantata No 211; Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht, Coffee)

7.30 BBC Philharmonic, live from the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, under Libor Pesek; Howard Shelley, piano. Beethoven (Piano Concerto No 3 in C minor); **8.10** A Family Affair. Jonathan Swain examines how Suk in his *Asrael Symphony*, came *to terms with the deaths* within 15 months of his teacher and father-in-law Antonin Dvořák and of his wife; **8.30** Suk (Symphony in C minor, Asrael)

9.45 Cinema 100: Alchemists of Light. Colin Ford continues the series on film cameramen

10.05 Fairest Isle: Britannia at the Opera. Pepusch's *The Death of Dido*. Orchestra of Opera Restor'd under Peter Holman

11.05-1.00am Hear and Now. In Memory of Luigi Nono. Including Irvine Arditti and the Arditti Quartet performing Nono's *Madrigal for Many Wayfarers* and *Fragments-Silence*

RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping Forecast (**LW** only) **6.00** News Briefing, incl Weather **6.10** Farming Today **6.25** Prayer for the Day **6.30** Today ***7.00, 7.30, 8.00, 8.30*** News incl **7.25, 8.25** Sport **7.45** Thought for the Day **8.40** Yesterday in Parliament **8.58** Weather

9.00 News 9.05 Desert Island Discs, featuring the actress Alison Steadman (r)

9.45 Letters from Ireland. The first in a series of six programmes reflecting aspects of life in Ireland today. This week, Maeve Binchy considers the Irish way with words

10.00-10.30 News; Print the Legend (FM only). See Choice

10.00 An Act of Worship (LW only)

10.15 This Sceptr'd Isle (LW only)

10.30 Woman's Hour introduced by Sheila McClennon. Serial. *Clean Break* by Val McDermid (5/15)

11.30 The Natural History Programme, presented by Kelvin Boot

12.00 News; You and Yours with Chris Choi

12.25pm The Food Programme Results of the traditional baked recipe competition **12.55** Weather

1.00 The World at One, presented by Nick Clarke

1.40 The Archers (r) **1.55** Shipping Forecast

2.00 News; The Classic Serial: Barnaby Rudge. See Choice

3.00 News; The Afternoon Shift, with Laurie Taylor

4.00 News 4.05 Kaleidoscope. Includes reviews of an exhibition of work by Emile Nolde and Oscar Hijuelos's New York Christmas story

4.45 Short Story: Power Cut, by Michelene Wandor. *Read by* Lesley Joseph

5.00 PM, with Chris Lowe and Jackie Hargrave **5.50** Shipping Forecast **5.55** Weather

6.00 Six O'Clock News

6.30 Going Places. Includes a visit to the Sandham Memorial Chapel in Berkshire

7.00 News 7.05 The Archers

7.20 Pick of the Week, with Christopher Serle

8.05 Any Questions? Jonathan Dimbleby chairs a topical discussion in Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Northumberland. With Sir Nicholas Lyell, MP; Ken Livingstone, MP; Chris Haskins, Chairman of Northern Foods; and Ann Leslie, special correspondent for the *Daily Mail*

8.50 Law in Action

9.15 Letter from America by Alistair Cooke

9.30 Kaleidoscope Feature: Between the Sheets. Kate Saunders searches for the secret ingredients of erotic fiction (r) **9.59** Weather

10.00 The World Tonight with Robin Lustig

10.45 Book at Bedtime: Inside Mr Enderby by Anthony Burgess. Read by the late Sir Robert Stephens (12/12)

11.00 Week Ending

11.25 Fourth Column with Alistair Beaton

11.45 Today in Parliament

12.00 News, incl **12.27am** Weather

12.30 The Late Book: Sucking Sherbert Lemons by Michael Carson. Read by David Holt (5/10)

1.00 As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.6-99.8. **RADIO 2.** FM 88.0-90.2. **RADIO 3.** FM 90.2-92.4. **RADIO 4.** FM 92.4-94.6; LW 198; MW 720. **RADIO 5 LIVE.** MW 693, 909. **WORLD SERVICE.** MW 648; LW 198 (12.45-5.55am). **CLASSIC FM.** FM 100-102. **VIRGIN RADIO.** FM *105.8; MW 1197, 1215.* **TALK RADIO UK.** MW 1053, 1089. **Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Gillian Maxey, Rosemary Smith and Susan Thomson**

هذا من الاصل

All-male institutions, strictly for the birds

REVIEW

Lynne Truss

In case anyone still retains the capacity for biographical surprise, GUESS WHAT? Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the scout movement, was a repressed homosexual with sadistic tendencies, who enjoyed photographs of naked boys. I guessed there would be something like that, didn't you? All that clean-living wiggle-waggle nonsense around the camp fire. All those knots. To be strictly honest, I remember when Tim Jeal's biography of Baden-Powell was published, so there were in fact few surprises in last night's **Secret Lives** (Channel 4). But although Baden-Powell emerged as a fundamentally harmless chap who merely enjoyed skewering wild pigs in India, it seems appropriate to go around saying GUESS WHAT? today because for an hour last night, GUESS WHAT? was in its element.

The strange aspect of Channel 4's *Secret Lives* films (like BBC2's *Reputations*) is not that they sensationalise the unofficial life of their subjects — they don't. But by neglecting the official story, they might leave ignorant viewers unaware that, say, Marie Stopes made a huge beneficial impact on birth control, or that Baden-Powell challenged generations of small boys to "do their best", and somehow enthused them with an abiding love of string. Last night's film was so unconcerned by straight biography that it never mentioned Baden-Powell's elevation to the peerage. Meanwhile his first claim to fame, the siege of Mafeking, was discussed only in terms of how he contrived it in the first place, how badly he treated the native blacks through its duration, and how he benefited from it personally afterwards, when he found himself "the most famous man in the world".

Was the scout movement a dream of classlessness? Yes, said Tim Jeal; no, said Michael Rosenthal (the author of *The Character Factory*) — although the constantly diverging views of these two experts were obstinately woven together as though they concurred. Rosenthal objected to Baden-Powell's racism, and interestingly insisted that the scout movement was a project to remove working-class children from the family sphere; to make them good little soldiers. Baden-Powell made his scouts swear loyalty to their country — but not to their parents. "The parents," sneered Rosenthal, "were part of the problem."

Ah, those all-male institutions were thrilling us in all ways last night. **Redcaps** (BBC1) is possibly the most boring series ever produced. In editing suites, technicians were found lifeless at the controls, the matchsticks still gruesomely propping open their staring eyes and the intravenous caffeine still pumping into a catheter in their arms. No one has ever taken a video camera inside the military police before. And now we know why.

Last night's instalment concerned charges of sexual offence, in which a corporal — with his back to the camera — was interviewed about allegations by a dull man in a shirt. "I didn't do it," the corporal insisted. To which the detective of the Special Investigations Branch would keep replying "Someone else said you did". The viewer — whose only useful role in this was to lip-read the names excised from the soundtrack — realised she was in for a long haul, and started to weave a life-size replica of the Bayeux Tapestry. But she was wrong to think the case might ultimately strengthen, one way or the other. A stalemate has never been so stale. "I never did that," the unseen corporal said. "All these people have come forward independently," said the detective.

Of course, many people enjoy television which allows them intellectual space for other things — the crossword, for example. But it's when a series gives you enough spare capacity to find new subtleties in *Tristram Shandy* that you start to smell a rat. In the end, this corporal was banged up for 112 days and lost his redundancy money of £40,000. However, not knowing who he was, what he looked like, or having any information to judge whether he deserved such punishment, the viewer completed the twiddly bit around the Battle of Hastings, and went off, grumbling, to bed.

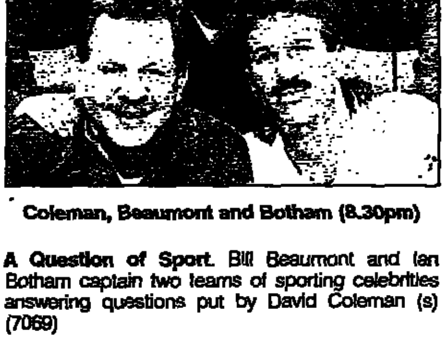
Saving the evening were BBC2's *The Ghostbusters of East Finchley* and BBC1's **Roughnecks**. Shore leave has brought romance to the life of Cinders (Ricky Tomlinson), and he is in a state of rare confusion. He wept. "I've been on me own so long now," he confided to the wonderful Hilary. "But I do like her. I'm just a bit frightened." The woman in question is played by Anne Reid, who used to appear on Victoria Wood. She took Cinders to a ceilidh and kissed him goodnight. Nobody expects Cinders to have a love life, least of all Cinders. His new girlfriend calls him Douglas. That's so sweet.

Finally, Tony Grounds's **The Ghostbusters of East Finchley** is Scooby Doo meets *Twin Peaks* and Mike Leigh, and you either like it or lump it. Personally I like it very much. Last night's tax raid involved a cheery, fat undertaker who, on very short acquaintance, addressed young Kevin (Paul Reynolds) as "You great wally wombat". *Ghostbusters* is full of surprises. For one thing, it makes you love youthful prigs like Kevin and Jackie, who preach about social responsibility. "Because of people like you," Kevin told the cheery tax-avoider, "my granny's had to wait a year to have her haemorrhoids done. She has to stand up to watch the telly."

Amazingly, all the actors are in tune with this strange project. Bill Paterson last night caressed his virginal tax forms with the dreamy question, "Have you ever seen a blue so blue?" There's no answer to that.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (29682)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (47069359)
9.10 Kilroy (s) (8100929)
10.00 News (Ceefax) and weather (3114935)
10.05 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (9314086)
10.30 Good Morning with Anne and Nick (s) (14682)
12.00 News (Ceefax) and weather (8789137)
12.05pm Pebble Mill. With country singer Charlie Landsborough (s) (5935069)
12.50 Regional News and weather (64874514)
1.00 One O'Clock News (Ceefax) and weather (24088)
1.30 Neighbours (Ceefax) (s) (96317663) **1.50 Columbo: Double Shock**. (r) (Ceefax) (s) (6288069) **3.05 Timekeepers** (s) (6904392)
3.30 Pingu (r) (6140205) **3.35 Jim Henson's Animal Show** (1754137) **4.00 The Itsy Bitsy Spider** (s) (1022934) **4.20 Julia Jekyll and Harriet Hyde** (Ceefax) (s) (8038359) **4.35 Record Breakers** (Ceefax) (s) (1313427)
5.00 Newsround (Ceefax) (3747934)
5.10 Blue Peter (Ceefax) (s) (8105663)
5.35 Neighbours (r) (Ceefax) (s) (245066)
6.00 Six O'Clock News (Ceefax) and weather (427)
6.30 Regional News magazines (779)
7.00 The World's Strongest Man. The third of five qualifying heats. (s) (2514)
7.30 Tomorrow's World. The implications for epilepsy sufferers of an experiment in which volunteers try to control the movement of objects on a computer screen by using the signals from their brain. Plus: the world's smallest robot (Ceefax) (s) (663)
8.00 Wildlife on One: The Tiger of the Highlands. The Scottish wildcat captured on film. Narrated by David Attenborough (r) (Ceefax) (s) (8934)



Coleman, Beaumont and Botham (8.30pm)

8.30 A Question of Sport. Bill Beaumont and Ian Botham captain two teams of sporting celebrities answering questions put by David Coleman (s) (7069)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News (Ceefax), regional news and weather (8779)
9.30 Dangerfield. GP/police surgeon series. As Paul finds out more about the death of Susan Wood, he discovers that his knowledge puts him in danger. With Nigel le Vaillant and Amanda Redman. (2/2) (Ceefax) (s) (506088)
10.20 FILM: Funny About Love (1990). With Gene Wilder, Christine Lahti, Mary Stuart Masterson and Robert Prosky. A cartoonist sees his marriage founder as a result of his complicated love-life. The joke somehow goes missing, despite the cast. Directed by Leonard Nimoy (810359) **WALES: 10.20** The Way It Is (963446) **10.50** Film: Funny About Love (93470040) **12.25am-2.15** Film: Plaza Suite (908422)
12.00 FILM: Plaza Suite (1971). With Walter Matthau, Maureen Stapleton, Barbara Harris, Lee Grant and Louise Sorel. Adaptation of three Neil Simon stories. Directed by Arthur Hiller (833644)
1.50am Weather (2335977)

BBC2

6.00am Technology Season
7.00 Breakfast News. (Signing) (9293972)
7.15 Lassie (2902088) **7.40 Swat Kats** (r) (7817330) **8.05 Smart** (r) (2285205)
8.35 The Record (s) (7618311) **9.00 The Forgotten Force** (r) (3495392) **9.50 Prue Leith** (r) (3276224) **10.00 Playdays** (s) (1082507)
10.25 FILM: Band Waggon (1940, b/w). A comedy starring Arthur Askey, directed by Marcel Varnel (8859446)
11.40 The Fugitive (b/w) (r). (Ceefax) (4680427)
12.30pm Working Lunch (43576) **1.00 William's Wish Wellingtons** (r) (s) (26221779) **1.05 Johnson and Friends** (r) (s) (48058717)
1.15 Movie Magic (r) (44600595) **1.40 Even More Of Glynn Christian**. Microwave fish dishes (s) (15697427) **1.55 A Helping Hand** (15670750)
2.10 Sport On Friday featuring skiing and women's hockey (s). Includes at **3.00 News**, weather (525589) **3.55 News** (Ceefax), regional news, weather (9784595)
4.00 Today's the Day (s) (392) **4.30 Ready, Steady, Cook** (s) (576) **5.00 Esther** Mixed race marriages (s) (6232) **5.30 Going Going Gone** (s) (156)
6.00 The Munsters (b/w). (Ceefax) (182330)
6.25 The New Avengers (r). (Ceefax) (981427)
7.15 Football, Fussball, Voetbal. Eastern European teams (253576)
8.00 Top Gear Motorsport. (Ceefax) (s) (6576)
8.30 Secret Nature. Slapton Ley in south Devon, a haven for the otter and pike (r). (Ceefax) (s) (8311)
9.00 CHOICE **Not the Nine O'Clock News** (r). (Ceefax) (9021)

Steve Coogan as Mike Crystal (9.30pm)

9.30 CHOICE **Coogan's Run**. (Ceefax) (s) (56040)
10.00 Have I Got News For You (s) (35069)
10.30 Newsnight with Peter Snow. (Ceefax) (153330)
11.15 Don't Give Up Your Day Job. The last in the series in which showbiz hopefuls are reviewed by celebrities. (s) (761682). **WALES: 11.15** Welsh Lobby (761682) **11.45** Don't Give Up Your Day Job (760953) **12.15am** Weather (2756644) **12.20** Red Hot and Country (3646880) **1.30-2.55** Film. As Is (3264996) **11.45 Weather** (464408)
11.50 CHOICE **Red Hot and Country** (s) (476663)
1.00am FILM: As Is (1986) starring Robert Carradine as a successful gay writer who contracts Aids and is shunned by everyone who knows him — except for a former lover and a hospice worker. Directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg (39373). Ends at **2.30**

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CHOICE

John Hiatt performs in Nashville (BBC2, 11.50pm)

Red Hot and Country
BBC2, 11.50pm

The fifth in a series of Aids awareness concerts under the "Red Hot" banner features country stars in performance at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. The line-up is a comprehensive mix of old timers, such as Earl Scruggs and Carl Perkins, and rising younger singers including Kathy Matthea, John Hiatt, Suzy Bogguss and Nanci Griffith. The coming together of different styles and generations on the same stage gives a fair idea of the evolution of the genre. Between numbers we are reminded of the long tradition of country singers raising funds to help the less fortunate, going back to Jimmie Rodgers in the early 1930s. The parallel is apposite for Rodgers died of tuberculosis, as much a scourge in its day as Aids is now.

Faith in the Future
ITV, 8.30pm

Sharp eyes will not have failed to notice the surprisingly close parallels between *Faith in the Future* and *Dressing For Breakfast* which immediately follows it on Channel 4. Viewers who so wish can switch directly from one comedy about a menopausal woman and her daughter to another. There is pain in both, though *Faith in the Future* largely hides it behind jokes. The pleasure is in watching Lynda Bellingham and Julia Sawalha, as mother and daughter, revealing their sexual hang-ups in language suitable to a pre-watershed transmission. Thanks to the typically genial script by Jan Etherington and Gavin Petrie, the ITV switchboard is unlikely to be bombarded with complaints.

Coogan's Run: Thursday Night Fever
BBC2, 9.30pm

No fewer than five writers collaborated on the latest Coogan adventure, though more does not necessarily mean better. But if this is one of the less notable episodes overall, the dialogue often sparkles and there is a funny-daft running gag about a man who cannot help dropping and smashing glasses. In his latest incarnation Coogan is Mike Crystal, a northern club singer bullied out of his proper pay by a mean boss. By the sort of accident that only comedy scriptwriters can devise he gets his revenge by impersonating a non-existent agent who goes under the disappointingly unfunny name of Clint Stallone. Paul Calf, a previous Coogan creation, makes a token appearance, bringing the tally of disguises up to three.

Not the Nine O'Clock News
BBC2, 9.00pm

Mel Smith, Pamela Stephenson and friends are often credited with breaking the mould of television comedy and resetting it in a more irreverent form. In fact they could be surprisingly conventional, as tonight's compilation demonstrates. It is true that there a follow-up to one of the team's most notoriously tasteless jokes, the one about the crushed hedgehog, but also striking is how often the show resorted to that old stand-by, the television parody. The execution, it has to be said, is often brilliant, as in a wonderfully accurate send-up of Esther Rantzen and her boys in *That's Life!* The versatile Stephenson plays Esther, as well as Angela Rippon and a presenter wittily rendered as Janny Shtrait-Pawuh.

Peter Waymark

CARLTON/LWT

6.00am GMTV (8747408)
9.25 Supermarket Sweep Quiz (s) (8825408)
9.55 London Today (Teletext) (8632886)
10.00 The Time . . . The Place. Live discussion programme hosted by John Stapleton (s) (2694175)
10.35 This Morning (28621601)
12.20pm London Today (Teletext) (8778021)
12.30 ITN Lunchtime News (Teletext) (2543359)
12.55 Home and Away (Teletext) (2511750)
1.25 Coronation Street (r) (Teletext) (44617885)
1.55 Shortland Street (s) (96345446)
2.20 The Chrystal Rose Show (s) (18293427)
2.50 High Road (Teletext) (5764682)
3.20 ITN News headlines (Teletext) (8259069)
3.25 London Today (Teletext) (8241040)
3.30 Jays World (s) (3987156) **3.40 St Tiggywinkles** (3967392) **3.55 The Spooks of Bottle Bay** (s) (9334175) **4.15 Freakazoid!** (1036137) **4.40 Fun House** (1697427)
5.10 LWT — Caring at Christmas presented by Caron Keating (2623040)
5.40 ITN News and weather (Teletext) (346589)
6.00 Home and Away (r). (Teletext) (186156)
6.25 London Tonight. (Teletext) (210576)
7.00 Family Fortunes (Teletext) (s) (7682)
7.30 Coronation Street. Raquel has the most emotional five days of her life as she tries to choose between cuddly Curly and desirable Des. (Teletext) (68798)

Emma Bernard and Lynda Bellingham (8.30pm)

8.30 CHOICE **Faith in the Future: Break Up, Break Down**. (Teletext) (s) (2137)
9.00 Woman on the Run: The Lawrencia Bembenek Story (Part 2 of 3) Based on the true story of a woman sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering her husband's former wife. With Tatum O'Neal, Bruce Greenwood, Peggy McCay, Alex McArthur, Victor Garber and Saul Rubinek (s) (5953)
10.00 ITN News at Ten and weather (Teletext) (22595)
10.30 FILM: St Elmo's Fire (1985). A big hit when it came out at the height of "yuppiedom" in the mid-1980s but with a script that now sounds slightly feeble, to say the least. Still, a clutch of brat-packers are in it and they can act even if they are, or were, brats. Rob Lowe, Demi Moore, Emilio Estevez, Andie MacDowell, Mare Winningham and Ally Sheedy. Martin Balsam feature in a tale of leaving college and having to face adult life. Directed by Joel Schumacher (15137)
12.30am London Tonight (Teletext) (5596538)
12.40 Sledge Hammer: Icebreaker. Dori falls for an imposter (9186880)
1.05 The James Whale Show (s) (8076977)
2.05 The Chart Show (s) (7520660)
3.00 Cinema, Cinema, Cinema (s) (80680083)
3.25 Noisy Mothers (s) (4088460)
4.30 The New Music. Mick Jagger and Keith Richards talk about the new Rolling Stones album, *Stripped*. (65335)
5.30 ITN Morning News (84489). Ends at **6.00**

CHANNEL 4

6.30am Ulysses 31. Cartoon series (r) (98175)
7.00 The Big Breakfast (70381)
9.00 FILM: Richard III (1955). Shakespeare's drama directed by and starring Laurence Olivier (29570798)
11.50 The Singing Teacher. Animation about a singing lesson (6568311)
12.00 Simply the Best. Kit Chapman on the autumn fruits of Kent (r) (29408)
12.30pm Sesame Street. Entertaining early learning series (1735798) **1.25 Madeline**. Adventures of a young French girl (r) (44615427)
1.55 Channel 4 Racing from Cheltenham The **2.00, 2.35, 3.10** and **3.45** races (40294412)
4.00 Think Tank. Team quiz. (Teletext) (s) (208)
4.30 Fifteen To One. (Teletext) (s) (972)
5.00 The Factory (r). (Teletext) (s) (7221088)
5.45 Holy Places (r). (Teletext) (s) (322953)
6.00 Blossom. Los Angeles-based teen comedy (r). (Teletext) (s) (137)
6.30 Moviewatch. Film magazine presented by Johnny Vaughan and Caroline Tudor. (s) (717)
7.00 Channel 4 News with Jon Snow. Includes headlines and weather at 7.30 (Teletext) (818427)
7.55 Book Choice. Journalist Mark Steyn looks at the latest humorous books. (Teletext) (s) (981243)
8.00 A Taste of Africa. Dorinda Hafner returns to her home country, Ghana, to cook okra stew with fish plus spinach dip and root vegetables (r). (Teletext) (s) (4972)
8.30 Brookside (Teletext) (s) (1309)

Edney tries to ignore Lindsay and Aird (9.00pm)

9.00 Dressing For Breakfast. The last thing Louise wants is her best friend Carla and her boyfriend Dave displaying their emotional attachment. Starring Beatie Edney, Holly Aird and Nigel Lindsay. (Teletext) (s) (4717)
9.30 Rising Damp. Classic comedy. An actor comes to stay and everybody becomes starstruck — except Rigsby (Leonard Rossiter) (r). (Teletext) (s) (58408)
10.00 Frasier. Seattle's finest restaurant is threatened, Frasier and Niles decide to do the decent thing. (Teletext) (s) (20137)
10.30 Clive Anderson Talks Back. The chatterbox who sometimes lets his guests get a word in edgeways greets Jack Dee, Rolf Harris and Tony Banks (s) (155798)
11.15 Crapston Villas. Adult animation (s) (524069)
11.30 Eurotrash — The World Tour. Antoine de Caunes and Jean Paul Gaultier in Japan (s) (78311)
12.00 Beavis and Butt-Head. Animated pop video reviews (74002)
12.30am FILM: Kiss Of Death (1947, b/w) starring Victor Mature and Richard Widmark. A crime drama directed by Henry Hathaway. (Teletext) (525373)
2.20 FILM: The House of Fear (1945, b/w) starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. The plot involves mysterious murders among the Murder Club in a Scottish mansion. Directed by Roy William Neill (4711335). Ends **3.35am**

VARIATIONS

ANGLIA

As London except: 12.55 Coronation Street (2511750) **1.25** Home and Away (44617885) **1.55** A Country Practice (36487408) **2.25-3.20** Murder, She Wrote (9850137) **5.10-5.40** Shortland Street (2623040) **6.30-7.00** Anglia News (175) **10.30** Anglia News Extra (31243) **11.00** Six Pairs of Pants (8392) **11.30** Plugged (492601) **12.35am** The James Whale Show (1347557) **1.35** Noisy Mothers (2278426) **2.30** The Album Show (25793) **3.30** Film: Beyond the Curtain (18915) **5.00** Cinema, Cinema, Cinema (76625)

CENTRAL

As London except: 1.55 A Country Practice (96345446) **2.20-3.20** Murder, She Wrote (4675663) **5.10-5.40** Shortland Street (2623040) **6.25-7.00** Central News (210576) **10.40** Central Weekend (3945601) **12.10am** Who Do You Do? (3157267) **12.40** Beyond Reality (9186880) **4.25** Jobfinder (2104064) **5.20** Asian Eye (1145248)

GRANADA

As London except: 12.55-1.25 Shortland Street (2511750) **1.25** Home and Away (89580137) **1.50** Blue Heelers (8128595) **2.50-3.20** Growing Pains (5764682) **5.10-5.40** High Road (2623040) **6.25-7.00** Granada Tonight (210576) **10.40** Up Front (803798) **11.40** Bodies of Evidence (472137) **12.35am-1.05** The Powers That Be (2731335)

HTV WEST

As London except: 12.55 Shortland Street (5845021) **1.20** High Road (44618514) **2.20-3.20** Murder, She Wrote (4675663) **5.10-5.40** A Country Practice (2623040) **6.30-7.00** HTV News (175) **10.30** HTV West Headlines and Weather (809137) **10.45** Film: The Anderson Tapes (83693514) **12.35am** The Good Sex Guide Abroad (2731335)

HTV WALES

As HTV WEST except: 6.30-7.00 Wales Tonight (175) **10.30** HTV Wales News and Weather (809137) **10.45** A Night Out with Money (735427) **11.45** Street Legal (443750)

MERIDIAN

As London except: 9.35am-10.00 Meridian News and Weather (8632886) **12.20pm-12.30** Meridian News and Weather (8778021) **12.55** Coronation Street (2511750) **1.25** Home and Away (44617885) **2.20-1.55** A Country Practice (96345446) **2.20-2.50** Houseparty (18293427) **3.25-3.30** Meridian News and Weather (8241040) **5.10** Home and Away (2623040) **5.37-5.40** Three Minutes - Your Story (822446) **6.00-7.00** Meridian Tonight (48021) **10.00** News at Ten; Weather (22595) **10.30** Meridian News and Weather (818885) **10.40** Six Pairs of Pants (601576) **11.10** Tales From The Crypt (544798) **11.30** Plugged (492601) **12.35am** The James Whale Show (1347557) **1.35** Noisy Mothers (2278426) **2.30** The Album Show (25793) **3.30** Film: Beyond the Curtain (18915) **5.00** Freescreen (76625)

WESTCOUNTRY

As London except: 9.55-10.00 Westcountry News (8632886) **12.20pm** Westcountry News (8794069) **12.25-12.30** My Story (8786040) **12.55** Coronation Street (2511750) **1.25** Home and Away (44617885) **1.55** The Woodward File (36487408) **2.25-3.20** Murder, She Wrote (9850137) **3.25-3.30** Westcountry News; Weather (8241040) **5.10-5.40** Home and Away (2623040) **6.00-7.00** Westcountry Live (48021) **10.30** Westcountry News; Weather (818885) **10.40** Film: Big Trouble in Little China (83685595) **12.35am** Coach (2731335)

YORKSHIRE

As London except: 9.55-10.00 Calendar News and Weather (8632886) **12.20pm-12.30** Yorkshire: Calendar News and Weather / Bilsdale: Network North (8778021) **12.55** Coronation Street (2511750) **1.25** Home and Away (44617885) **1.55-3.20** The Enthronement (7424458) **3.25-3.30** Yorkshire: Calendar News / Bilsdale: Network North (8241040) **5.10-5.40** Home and Away (2623040) **5.55** Calendar / Network North (514779) **6.30-7.00** Maynard's Bill (175) **10.30** Calendar News and Weather (818885) **10.40** The Enthronement (803798) **11.40** War and Remembrance (658779) **1.35am** The James Whale Show (9811286) **2.35** The Big E (4885624) **3.30** The Beat (37538) **4.30** Shift (8734441) **5.25** Music Video (7174080)

S4C

Starts: 7.00 The Big Breakfast (70381) **9.00** Film: Richard III (29570798) **11.50** The Singing Teacher (6568311) **12.00pm** Sesame Street (57779) **1.00** Slot Meithrin (17798) **1.30** Sophie's Meal Course: Lamb (35400359) **1.55** Channel 4 Racing (40294412) **4.00** Think Tank (208) **4.30** Hands Up (972) **5.00** 5 Pump: Mega (5088) **5.30** Fifteen to One (224) **6.00** Newyddion (539224) **6.15** Heno (940205) **7.00** Pobol Y Cwm (287779) **7.25** Dros Ben Llestri (518779) **8.00** Cefn Gwlad (4972) **8.30** Newyddion (1309) **9.00** Achabachyrn Ergydion (322972) **9.45** Holy Places (680576) **10.00** Brookside (20137) **10.30** Clive Anderson Talks Back (155798) **11.15** Crapston Villas (524069) **11.30** Eurotrash (78311) **12.00am** Beavis and Butthead (74002) **12.30** Film: Kiss of Death (525373) **2.20** Film: Sherlock Holmes in The House of Fear (4711335)

SATELLITE

● **For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Vision supplement, published Saturday**

SKY ONE

7.00am The DJ Kat Show (33934) **8.00** Power Rangers (79427) **8.30** Press Your Luck (78798) **9.00** Court TV (52750) **9.30** Oprah (78088) **10.30** Concentration (58934) **11.00** Sally Jessy Raphael (66088) **12.00** Jeopardy (72514) **12.30pm** Designing Women (89392) **1.00** The Waltons (17175) **2.00** Geraldo (48214) **3.00** Court TV (3021) **3.30** Oprah (3021) **4.20** Power Rangers (3021) **4.45** Postcards from the Hedge (3021) **5.00** Star Trek (7601) **6.00** The Simpsons (2885) **6.30** Jeopardy (3137) **7.00** LAPD (8330) **7.30** M*A*S*H (2021) **8.00** Just Kidding (4750) **8.30** Coppers (3885) **9.00** Walker, Texas Ranger (27576) **10.00** Star Trek (20663) **11.00** Law and Order (47953) **12.00** Late Show (47953) **12.45am** The Untouchables (47953) **1.30** Rachel Gunn (16286) **2.00** Hit Mix (16286)

SKY NEWS

News on the hour.
6.00am Sunrise (79977) **10.30** ABC Nightline (56576) **1.30pm** CBS News (22311) **2.30** Parliament (86798) **3.30** Parliament (4243) **6.30** Tonight (37069) **8.30** Entertainment **11.30** CBS News (12088) **12.30am** ABC News (31083) **1.30** Tonight (89441) **2.30** Worldwide Report (63538) **3.30** Parliament (68083) **4.30** CBS News (14625) **5.30-6.00** ABC News (26489)

SKY MOVIES

6.00am Showcase (59595) **8.00 Dames** (1934) (24514) **10.00 Quest for Justice** (1993) (90408) **12.00 A Perfect Couple** (1979) (14137) **2.00pm Free Willy** (1993) (44243) **4.00 Bloomfield** (1969) (92055) **6.00 Quest for Justice** (1993) (31779) **8.00 Free Willy** (1993) (36224) **10.00 Serial Mom** (1994) (430137) **11.35 Death Ring** (1991) (748953) **1.10am Real Men** (1987) (748953) **2.35 Leave of Absence** (1994) (748953) **4.05 Bloomfield** (1969) (183354)

SKY MOVIES GOLD

4.00pm Quality Street (1937) (8137) **6.00 April in Paris** (1952) (13311) **8.00 Compulsion** (1959) (25155) **10.00 Conan the Barbarian** (1982) (25156) **12.15am The Big Chill** (1983) (628809) **2.00-3.40 The Devil Rides Out** (1968) (165557)

THE MOVIE CHANNEL

6.00am No Man of Her Own (1950) (57137) **8.00 The Jetsons Meet the Flintstones** (1987) (22156) **10.00 Double, Double, Toil and Trouble** (1993) (81750) **12.00 Rigoletto** (1993) (12779) **2.00pm Cagney and Lacey: The Return** (1994) (42885) **4.00 The Jetsons Meet the Flintstones** (1987) (3525) **6.00 Final Days of Butch and Sundance** (1993) (99458) **7.30 UK Top Ten** (5359) **8.00 Black Fox: The Price of Peace** (1993) (76514) **9.30 The Vanishing** (1993) (56885) **11.30 Poltergeist III** (1988) (738576) **1.10am Murder Between Friends** (1994) (993977) **2.50 Empty Cradle** (1993) (979847) **4.25-6.00 Double, Double, Toil and Trouble** (1993) (707118)

THE DISNEY CHANNEL

Sky Movies Gold from 10pm to 4am.
6.00am Under the Umbrella Tree (13441) **6.30** Muppet Babies (13441) **7.00** Winnie the Pooh (13441) **7.30** Ducktales (13441) **8.00** Chip 'n' Dales (13441) **8.30** Wonderland (13441) **9.00** Fraggle Rock (13441) **9.30** Pooh Corner (13441) **10.00** Dumbo's Circus (13441) **10.30** Quack Attack (13441) **11.00** Disney (13441) **12.00** FILM Alan and Naomi (13441) **2.00pm** Wonderland (13441) **2.30** Umbrella Tree (13441) **3.00** Fraggle Rock (13441) **3.30** Winnie the Pooh (13441) **4.00** Quack Attack (13441) **4.30** Ducktales (13441) **5.00** Cyberstar (13441) **6.30** Faerie Tale Theatre (13441) **7.30** Eyewitness (13441) **8.00-10.00** Best of Hollywood: Fight for Freedom (13441)

EUROSPORT

7.30am Football (77972) **9.00** Skiing (49021) **10.30** Skiing (85863) **11.00** Ski Jumping (95514) **12.00** Skiing (52953) **12.30pm** Skiing (52953) **1.15** Ski Jumping (52953) **2.00** Freestyle Skiing (79088) **3.00** Eurofun (1205) **3.30** Football (87750) **4.30** Ski Jumping (42392) **5.30** Skiing (64088) **6.30** News **7.00** Snooker (87595) **9.00** Boxing (98088) **10.00** Wrestling (91175) **11.00** Golf (83779) **12.00-12.30am** News (32064)

SKY SPORTS

7.00am Sports Centre (72663) **7.30** Racing News (91798) **8.00** Wrestling Action Zone (18507) **9.00** Aerobics (94311) **9.30** Tight Lines (12446) **10.30** Ice Warriors (51446) **12.30pm** Aerobics (23311) **1.00** Netbusters (28866) **2.00** Pool (784430) **5.00** Wrestling (5507) **6.00** Sports Centre (31330) **7.00** Sheffield v Workington (31330) **9.25** Centre (167175) **9.30** Boxing (92601) **11.30** Sports Centre (29292) **12.30am** The Big League (58335) **2.30-4.30** Boxing (17248)

SKY SPORTS 2

7.00pm Trans World Sport (31426) **8.00** Pool (31426) **11.00** Trans World Sport (31426) **12.00** *Cricket Show* (31426) **12.30-1.00am** Land Yachting (31426)

Glenn Close and Kevin Kline (Sky Movies Gold, 12.15am)

SKY SOAP

7.00pm Guiding Light (26489) **7.55** As the World Turns (26489) **8.50** Peyton Place (26489) **9.20** Days of Our Lives (26489) **10.10** Another World

SKY TRAVEL

11.00am Globetrotter (26489) **11.30** American Vacation (26489) **12.30pm** Pierre Franey's Cooking in France (26489) **1.00** Around the World (26489) **1.30** Hawaii Cooks (26489) **2.00** E (26489) **2.30** Cruising the Globe (26489) **3.00** Getaway (26489) **3.30-4.00** Boomerang (26489)

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

4.00pm Our Century (26489) **5.00** History Alive (26489) **6.00-7.00** Biography (26489)

THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

1.00am Swamp Thing (26489) **1.30** Ray Bradbury Theatre (26489) **2.00** FILM: Quatermass II (26489) **3.30-4.00** Ray Bradbury Theatre (26489)

TLC

9.00am Joy of Painting (26489) **9.30** Cooking with Kurma (26489) **10.00** Furniture To Go (26489) **10.30** Soul Mates (26489) **11.00** Only Human (26489) **12.00** Prisoners (26489) **12.30pm** Jimmy's (26489) **1.00** Cooking with Kurma (26489) **1.30** Joy of Painting (26489) **2.00** The Right Thing? (26489) **2.30** Get Well Soon (26489) **3.00** Furniture to Go (26489) **3.30-4.00** Two's Country (26489)

UK GOLD

7.00am Angels (165557) **7.30** Neighbours (165557) **8.00** Sons and Daughters (165557) **8.30** EastEnders (165557) **9.00** The Bill (165557) **9.30** The Sullivans (165557) **10.00** Bergerac (165557) **11.00** Dallas (165557) **12.00** Sons and Daughters (165557) **12.30pm** Neighbours (165557) **1.00** EastEnders (165557) **1.30** The Bill (165557) **2.00** The Sullivans (165557) **2.25** Are You Being Served? (165557) **3.00** Angels (165557) **3.30** Eldorado (165557) **4.00** Casualty (165557) **5.05** Larry Grayson's Generation Game (165557) **6.15** Kenny's Comic Cuts (165557) **6.25** EastEnders (165557) **7.00** Eldorado (165557) **7.30** Taxi (165557) **8.00** The Best of Top of the Pops (165557) **8.20** Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em (165557) **9.00** Widows (165557) **10.00** The Bill (165557) **10.35** Classic Sport (165557) **11.35** The Young Ones (165557) **12.15am** Dr Who (165557) **12.45** FILM: Code of Silence (165557) **2.25-3.00** Shopping at Night (165557)

TCC

6.00am Casper and Friends (38392) **7.00** The New Pink Panther Show (23972) **7.30** Ready or Not (19779) **8.00** Sweet Valley High (40514) **8.30** Casper and Friends (40514) **8.45** Dinobabies (40514) **9.00** Tiny TCC (40514) **12.30pm** Tiny TCC (63069) **2.30** Happily Ever After (1330) **3.00** Sonic (7345) **3.30** The New Pink Panther Show (3175) **4.00** California Dreams (2663) **4.30-5.00** Sweet Valley High (8866)

NICKELODEON

6.00am Blue (44427) **6.30** Count Duckula (50953) **7.00** Bethink (50953) **7.05** Teenage Turtles (50953) **7.45** Rugrats (237040) **8.15** Doug (320224) **8.45** Rocko (320224) **9.00** Alvin and the Chipmunks (92953) **9.30** Pee-Wee (27137) **10.00** Banana Sandwich (88224) **11.00** Children's BBC (84048) **12.00** Rocko's Modern Life (12717) **12.30pm** Aaahh!!! Real Monsters (21953) **1.00** Ship to Shore (79576) **1.30** Mighty Max (20224) **2.00** Speed Racer (8972) **2.30** Speed Racer (5514) **3.00** Count Duckula (4779) **3.30** Pet Shop (7359) **4.00** Teenage Turtles (6866) **4.30** Rugrats (5750) **5.00** Clarissa (9224) **5.30** Wishbone (9330) **6.00** Doug (6243) **6.30** Are You Afraid? (7595) **7.00** Ferris Bueller (9088) **7.30-8.00** Sister Sister (3779)

DISCOVERY

4.00pm Africa (13441) **5.00** Vanishing Worlds (13441) **6.00** Invention (13441) **6.30** Beyond 2000 (13441) **7.30** On The Road Again (13441) **8.00** Lonely Planet (13441) **9.00** Wings Over The World (13441) **10.00** Azimuth Subs! Submarine (13441) **11.00** Subs! Next Step (13441) **11.30-12.00** Shadow on the Reef (13441)

BRAVO

12.00 FILM: Monster from Green Hell (13441) **1.20pm** Honey West **2.00** The Saint (13441) **3.00** Scotland Yard (13441) **3.30** Man from Interpol (13441) **4.00** FILM: The Lavender Hill Mob (13441) **5.30** Honey West (13441) **6.00** Danger Man **6.30** The Wild Wild West (13441) **7.30** The Protectors (13441) **8.00** The Saint (13441) **9.00-12.00** FILM: Kelly's Heroes (13441)

PARAMOUNT

8.00pm Entertainment (5408) **8.30** I Love Lucy (7243) **9.00** Home Court (52798) **9.30** Laverne and Shirley (41717) **10.00** Entertainment (13446) **10.30** Nightstand (68330) **11.30** Dr Katz (70717) **12.00** Odd Couple (45538) **12.30am** I Love Lucy (26915) **1.00** Home Court (15083) **1.30** Laverne and Shirley (50644) **2.00** Entertainment (82642) **2.30** Nightstand (90606) **3.30-4.00** Dr Katz (14489)

UK LIVING

6.00am Agony Hour (5040) **7.00** Magazine (5040) **9.00** Front Gardens (5040) **9.30** Kate and Allie (5040) **10.00** Hearts of Gold (5040) **10.50** Entertainment Now! (5040) **11.00** Young and Restless (5040) **11.55** Health (5040) **12.30pm** Food and Drink (5040) **1.05** Kilroy (5040) **2.00** Agony Hour (5040) **3.00** Magazine (5040) **4.00** Infatuation UK (5040) **4.30** Crosswits (5040) **5.05** Joker's Wild (5040) **5.30** Bewitched (5040) **6.00** Esther (5040) **6.30** Delia Smith (5040) **7.05** Infatuation UK (5040) **7.35** Joker's Wild (5040) **8.00** Young and Restless (5040) **9.00** FILM: A Cry in the Night (5040) **11.00-12.00** Dangerous Women (5040)

FAMILY CHANNEL

5.00pm Wonder Years (5040) **5.30** Tintin (2446) **6.00** Batman (9359) **6.30** Catchphrase (3311) **7.00** Through the Keyhole (2576) **7.30** Fall Guy (84934) **8.30** Home To Roost (7589) **9.00** Ruth Rendell (75863) **10.30** Neon Rider (19088) **11.30** Batman (90156) **12.00** Fall Guy (92625) **1.00am** Zorro (51809) **1.30** Rhoda (87712) **2.00** Neon Rider (11441) **3.00** Rhoda (64373) **3.30** Zorro (27977) **4.00** Wonder Years (31170) **4.30-5.00** Black Stallion (65002)

MTV

6.30am The Grind (72750) **7.00** 3 from 1 (72750) **7.15** Awake on the Wildside (72750) **8.00** VJ Maria (922779) **11.00** Soul (20885) **12.00** Greatest Hits (73330) **1.00pm** Music Non-Stop (73330) **2.45** 3 from 1 (73330) **3.00** Cinematic (73330) **3.15** Hanging Out (73330) **4.00** News (73330) **4.15** Hanging Out (73330) **4.30** Dial MTV (6804) **5.00** Real World London (4798) **5.30** The Pulse (1576) **6.00** Hanging Out (79514) **7.00** Greatest Hits (10224) **8.00** Most Wanted (56798) **9.30** Beavis and Butthead (81359) **10.00** News (803224) **10.15** Cinematic (908779) **10.30** The Head (39408) **11.00** Party Zone (88069) **1.00** Night Videos (88069)

VH-1

7.00am Power Breakfast (26489) **9.00** Café VH-1 (26489) **12.00** Heart and Soul (26489) **1.00pm** Vinyl Years (26489) **2.00** Go-Gos (26489) **3.00** Into the Music (26489) **6.00** VH-1-2-3: John Lennon (26489) **7.00** VH-1 For You (26489) **8.00** Backtrack, 1967 Part 2 (26489) **8.30** Planet Rock Profiles (26489) **9.00** Ten of the Best: Fairport Convention (26489) **10.00** Vinyl Years (26489) **11.00** Around and Around (26489) **12.00** The Nightfly Rocks (26489) **2.00am** Dawn Patrol

CMT EUROPE

Country music from **5am** to **7pm** including **5.00pm** Saturday Nite Dance Ranch **6.00-7.00** Big Ticket

ZEE TV

7.00am Asian Morning (79977) **8.30** Aap Ki Farmaish (79977) **9.00** FILM: Mere Baad (79977) **12.00** Dekh Bhai Dekh (79977) **12.30pm** Zabaan Sambhal Ke (79977) **1.00** FILM Bewafa Se Wafa (79977) **4.00** Manasi (79977) **4.30** Yaadon Ke Rang (79977) **5.00** Zee Zone (79977) **5.30** Hip Hip Hurray (79977) **6.30** Zee and U (79977) **7.00** BBCD (79977) **7.30** Filmi Chakker (79977) **8.00** News (79977) **8.30** Yule Love Stories (79977) **9.00-12.00** FILM: Kanoon (79977)

CARTOON NETWORK/TNT

Continuous cartoons from 5am to 7pm, then TNT films as below.
7.00pm Hot Millions (1968) (26489) **9.00 Wild Rovers** (1971) (26489) **11.15 Forced Vengeance** (1982) (26489) **12.55am Joe The Busybody** (1959) (26489) **2.25-5.00 The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight** (1971) (26489)

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RUGBY UNION 39
COUNTING COST
OF FAILURE TO
LAY DOWN LAW

SPORT

TENNIS 40
BECKER EASES INTO
LAST FOUR WITH
VICTORY OVER BLACK

FRIDAY DECEMBER 8 1995

Manager set to join Midlands rivals

Leicester lose McGhee in action replay

By Peter Ball

FOR the second time in 13 months, Leicester City Football Club has lost a manager in pursuit of a job in the West Midlands. Having been refused permission to talk to Wolverhampton Wanderers, Mark McGhee and his two assistants, Colin Lee and Mike Hickman, handed in their resignations yesterday.

"We have written to all three telling them that we do not accept their resignations and that we are consulting our lawyers," Martin George, the Leicester chairman, said. Two players, Steve Walsh and Gary Parker, and the youth team coaches, David Nish and Chris Turner, have taken temporary charge.

McGhee is now expected to apply for the job at Molineux — if he has not already done so. He was believed to have travelled to Northumberland yesterday to talk to Jonathan Hayward, the Wolverhampton chairman.

As Wolverhampton had asked for permission to speak to McGhee before the weekend, and McGhee described the club as one of only four he would leave Leicester for, his appointment seems a foregone conclusion. However, it is unlikely to be straightforward.

With the Leicester board taking legal advice, a Football League investigation or legal action, amid considerable bitterness, seems more likely than not.

"We are all upset about what has happened," Walsh said. "Personally, I hope Mark McGhee gets relegated and we go on to get promotion. It all came at a bad time, just as with Brian Little 12 months ago."

"I'm disappointed that Mark McGhee couldn't even turn up and say cheerio," Iwan Roberts, the club's Wales forward, added.

The board's response was equally sharp. "The resignations of all three employees have been handed in, but have not been accepted, and will not be accepted," George said. "The offer we made to Mark McGhee to stay would have made him the highest-paid manager in the first division by a street, and made him one of the highest-paid in the country.

"The reaction of the board was one of disbelief that such generous terms could not find any favour with them. We are consulting our lawyers. It will be one step at a time. At the moment, the only breach of contract is that they have not reported for duty this morning. One assumes they don't intend to make any further appearance at the club.

"The letters of resignation from Hickman and Lee said they could not carry on working any longer at the club because the man they had come to work with was resigning. As for Mark McGhee, it would be difficult to find a reason within the letter for his resignation. I have to assume that money was the reason for everything, because we had agreed on other matters over the last three days."

McGhee made his feelings clear at the weekend, but Leicester made strenuous efforts to persuade him to stay, culminating in a day-long board meeting on Tuesday, when they are believed to have offered McGhee a rise of £1,000 a week, taking his salary above £200,000 a year. McGhee, however, has insisted that his ambition to manage a "sleeping giant" is more important than cash.

The move is a reprise of the events at Filbert Street last year, when Leicester lost Little to Aston Villa. Little also resigned after being refused permission by George to go to Villa Park. Ironically, McGhee arrived as Little's replacement, leaving equally sore feelings behind him at Reading, for changing his mind 24 hours after apparently being talked out of moving.

Last year, Leicester considered going to court after failing to agree compensation with Villa. This time, with the club enjoying a successful season, a court case seems almost inevitable.

Gascoigne dilemma, page 39

McGhee: ambitious

Clubs charged by FA

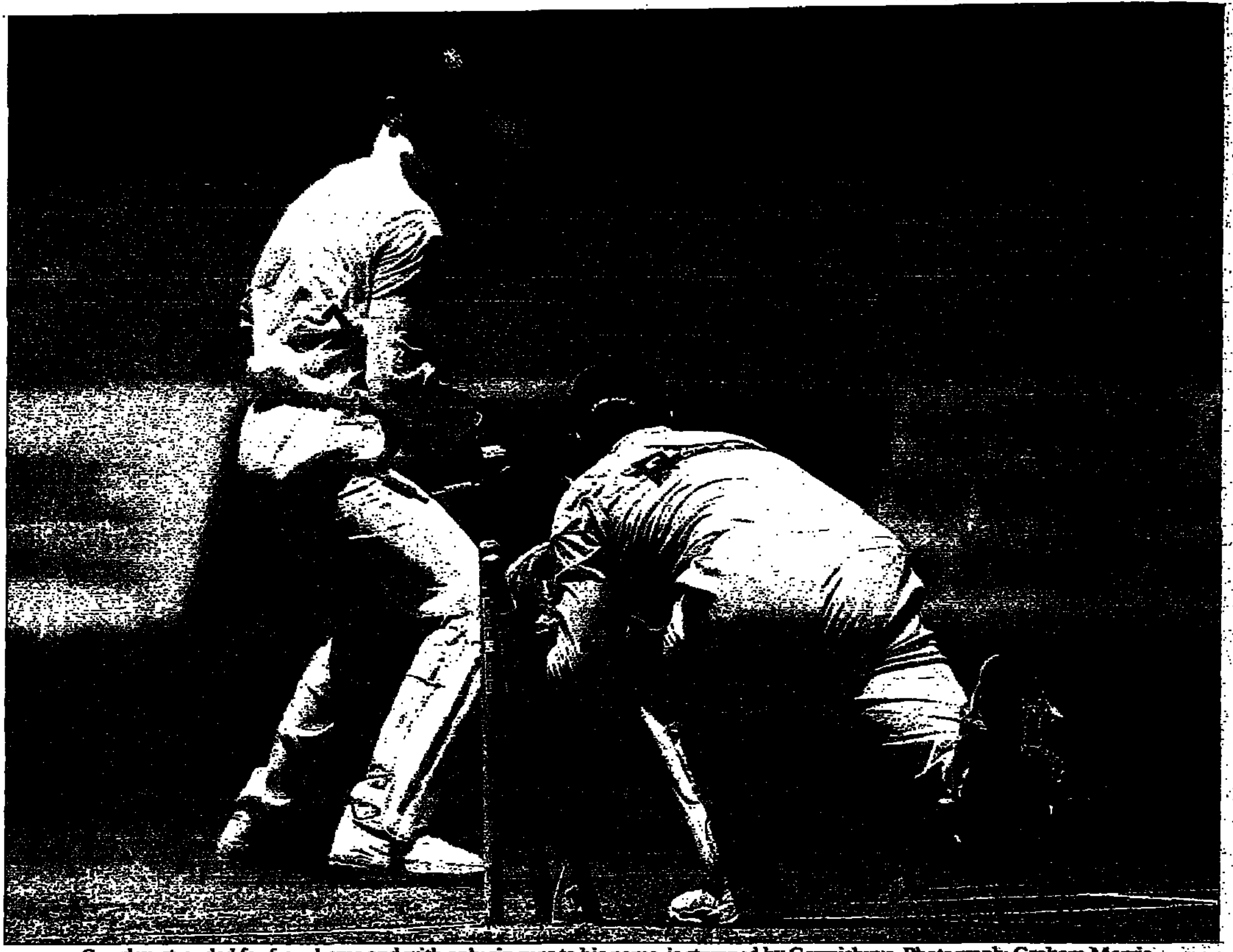
FULHAM and Gillingham have been charged with misconduct by the Football Association, a sequel to the stormy Endsleigh Insurance League match between them on November 25.

The referee, Mick Bailey, booked ten players, sent off two and, in his report to the FA, described the last ten minutes of the third division match as "the most disgraceful exhibition by professional footballers I have ever seen."

Birmingham City are to request a personal hearing in an effort to clear the club's name after being charged with misconduct as a result of crowd trouble at their match against Millwall last month. They face a substantial fine or the closure of their ground if the charge is proved.

After crowd trouble against Stoke City three years ago, Birmingham were fined £50,000 and ordered to play two games behind closed doors — both punishments suspended for a year.

The Arsenal pair, Dennis Bergkamp and Glenn Helder, are in the Holland squad for the European championship play-off against Ireland at Liverpool next Wednesday.


Crawley, stranded far from home and with only six runs to his name, is stumped by Germishuys. Photograph: Graham Morris

England batsmen lack application

From Alan Lee
Cricket Correspondent
in Paarl, South Africa

PAARL (first day of four; England XI won the toss): England XI have scored 263 for eight against Boland

A YEAR ago, this infant ground staged its first international game and suffered the shame of an early abandonment because the surface was too dangerous. New Zealand, the visitors, spent the spare time in the local wineries, from where a hitherto successful tour went into scandal and decline. Both Paarl and England avoided repetition yesterday, when the alternative to drama was tame cricket on a sedated pitch.

England's total, while apparently modest, may well be sufficient for their purposes. Although slow, the mucky grey pitch began to bounce unevenly late in the day and the ball will also turn. Mike Watkinson and Richard Illingworth can expect lengthy spells today, though as spin is unlikely to feature in the third Test match there is an air of irrelevance to the proceedings.

The significant innings was played by John Crawley, and it was not a good one. He unfurled a classical cover drive for four as his first scoring shot but had made only six from 41 balls when he advanced down the pitch to drive an off break and was stumped by a distance. Crawley remains inked into the Test team as Mark Ramprakash's replacement at No 3, but this innings was disturbingly reminiscent of Ramprakash at his self-conscious worst.

At least the day had its distractions, for this is one of the country's loveliest areas, with the Drakenstein mountains standing out from a clear blue sky as a noble backcloth to a ground that panders to modernism with its floodlights and its computerised scoreboard, on which images of dancing girls greeted each wicket.

It was almost an hour before the girls danced, an hour in which Phillip DeFreitas, the Boland overseas player, bowled six overs and retired convinced that the pitch offered him nothing. Billy Stelling, a lively first-change, bowled Robin Smith for 39 as he played around his front pad and, 90 minutes later, bowled his opening partner, Alec Stewart, for the same score.

Scoreboard 40

Stewart is making a habit of donating his wicket when set and his latest dismissal, from a loose and unbalanced drive, was not reassuring. Michael Atherton needs some help in the tenacity department and, Jack Russell apart, it is difficult to see from where it will come.

Graham Thorpe played unevenly for his 56, surviving a confident appeal for a catch at silly point and being dropped at slip. Finally, he was given out, caught behind off Bryan Drew. Thorpe did not appear to agree with the verdict, but then he seldom does.

Graeme Hick had struck one majestic straight drive for six and looked in no difficulty whatever, which may explain a somewhat arrogant cut against a straight ball from the slow left-arm of Claude Henderson. It bowled him, condemning the sparse, sunbathing crowd to the inevitability of several hours watching Russell bat.

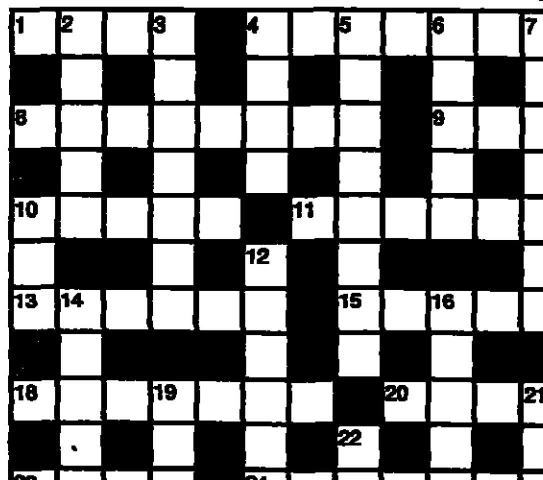
The one man in England's batting order who never seems to fail simply carried on where he had left off in Johannesburg, venturing nothing aggressive until the bowling became ragged. It was not pretty but it may easily have eased England towards a commanding position.

Those who found it all a little wearing wandered among the assorted stalls or stood in the shade of the trees and listened to the deafening racket of the crickets overhead. It was a tranquil, timeless evening but not without quality in its cricket.

The low, predatory catch at short extra cover, with which Stelling snared Mike Watkinson, was a highlight and, after the suffering Darren Gough had played on to Willoughby, DeFreitas returned to extract sufficient bounce with the new ball to have Martin caught behind.

The public address announcer, who had been earnestly congratulating bowlers on maiden overs throughout the day, was beside himself as DeFreitas now bowled eight in succession. Russell was typically immovable and the game dozed to the close.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 647

ACROSS
1 Exchange (4)
4 Definite; constructive (8)
8 (Tediously) instructive (8)
9 Conversation (4)
10 Book-jacket summary (5)
11 Rotating shaft, pulls rope, tape (7)
13 With pluck (6)
15 Inner covering of eg jacket (6)
18 Plead, beg (7)
20 Tiny piece of eg comfort (5)
23 Grain husks (4)
24 Advice, direction (8)
25 Single-reed instrument (8)
26 Robert —, neo-classical architect/designer (4)

DOWN
2 Giddy round of activity (5)
3 Grass-covered plain (7)
4 Fruit inner skin; importance (4)
5 Gregarious (8)
6 — Oates, Andronicus (5)
7 A criminal (7)
10 Catch; what to put it in (3)
12 Element no. 1 (8)
14 Fleet commander (7)
16 State of liberation (Buddhist) (7)
17 Prattle (3)
19 Of the moon (5)
21 Muslim pilgrimage city (5)
22 Disturbance; very funny person (4)

The solution to 646 will be published on Wednesday, December 13

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Sampras forced out by knee injury

From Stuart Jones
Tennis Correspondent
in Munich

PETE SAMPRAS last night chose to leave his most lucrative watering hole voluntarily for the sake of his health. Claiming to have aggravated the knee problem which beset him during the Davis Cup final in Moscow last weekend, he pulled out of his Grand Slam Cup quarter-final against Goran Ivanisevic, scheduled to be staged this afternoon.

Had any competitor other than the world No 1 withdrawn, the announcement would have been greeted here with dark suspicion. However, the tournament doctor was at his side to confirm that an ultrasound examination had revealed that Sampras is suffering from inflammation of the right knee.

"I had cramp there on Friday and felt pain behind the knee on Sunday," Sampras, who won the Cup almost single-handedly for the United States, said. "It was stiff when I got here but it didn't feel that bad until today when I had a hard time straightening it.

"The Davis Cup took a lot more out of me than I thought it had. My body has just broken down." His comments should not be doubted nor should the mental strain of carrying his country to the game's most famous team trophy be ignored but, in the past three weeks, he has played only eight matches.

He appreciated that observers would question the legitimacy of his decision. "Obviously I'm paid a lot to play here and it would have been nice to end the year with a couple more million [dollars] but it is not the way I would have wanted to go."

The Grand Slam Cup, nevertheless, has been staggeringly profitable for him. The world's best male player, with 36 titles to his name, has collected almost a quarter of his total prize-money, in excess of $21 million (about £14 million), inside the Olympiahalle.

Although he won only one match this week, against Patrick McEnroe, he collected $262,500 for reaching the last eight and another $500,000, his bonus for having won two of the grand slam championships.

Sampras expects to be fit in time to compete in the Australian Open next month. In his absence, Ivanisevic was ushered through to the last four, where he will play either Jacco Eltingh or Yevgeny Kafelnikov.

Becker's stroll, page 40

Bates and Harding make up

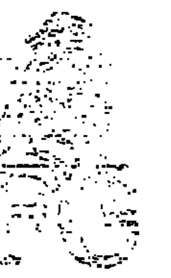
Alyson Rudd sees olive branches extended by the warring factions at Stamford Bridge

THE power struggle at Stamford Bridge ended peacefully — or was at least suspended — yesterday. Ken Bates, the Chelsea chairman, and Matthew Harding, a club director and would-be chairman, who have been at loggerheads for more than a month, are talking business again.

The ban imposed by Bates, keeping Harding away from the directors' box, has been lifted, enabling Harding to emerge from the boardroom meeting at Stamford Bridge yesterday, saying: "I'm very happy, thank you very much."

It was the first time that Harding and Bates had met since their rivalry turned to animosity a month ago. Harding resigned from the board of Chelsea Village, Bates's vehicle for turning Stamford Bridge into a leisure complex, and Bates responded by barring Harding from the directors' seating, car park and players' lounge.

Recent communications between them have been conducted through the tabloid press but yesterday Alan Shaw, the company secretary of Chelsea Village, emerged as Harding disappeared into his taxi to announce that the club's directors had voted unanimously that there should be no further press comment while the financing of Chelsea is being planned.



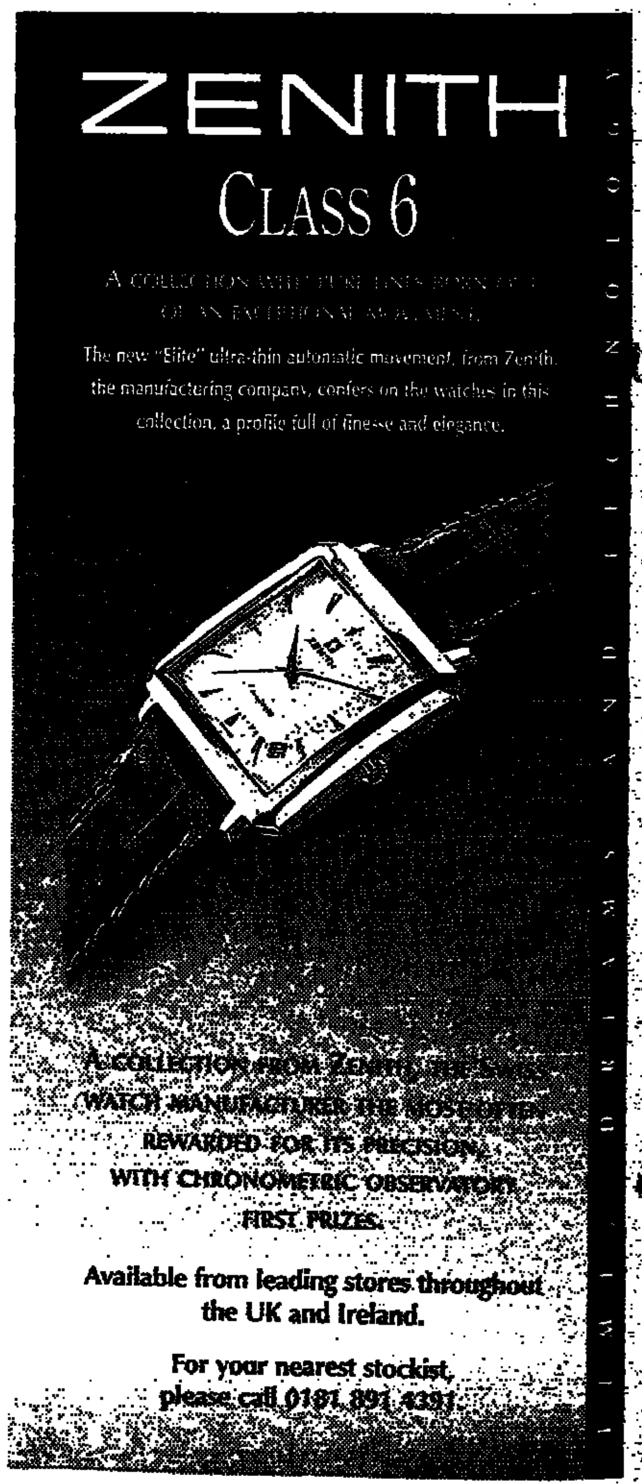
A prepared statement read: "The board met today at Stamford Bridge, where normal business was conducted in a completely amicable manner. Discussions are proceeding on the best way forward to finance and achieve Chelsea Football Club's future aspirations in the best interests of the club and its supporters." The only fact Shaw was able to give the waiting press was that the pair would have lunch and sit together at the home match against Newcastle United on Saturday.

If the apparent harmony is to progress, however, they will have to agree how Chelsea should be expanded. Bates wants shops, restaurants and an hotel; Harding wants new players. Bates wants to know how much Harding is prepared to invest; Harding wants to know who owns the shares in Chelsea Village.

Of immediate concern at the boardroom meeting yesterday were a series of questions drawn up by Colin Hutchinson, the Chelsea chief executive. These related to how far Chelsea Village, the club's holding company, would interfere in the buying and selling of players.

As Harding left the meeting smiling, it is possible that an element of compromise may have been reached on the role of Chelsea Village. Bates had already conceded that the pitch needed to be widened, even though this clashed with his development proposals.

Reports that Hutchinson, Harding and Yvonne Todd, a club director, would attempt to oust Bates, appear to have been unfounded. Bates announced, before the boardroom session, that he was prepared to extend Glenn Hoddle's contract. Harding is a great admirer of Hoddle and there had been concern among his supporters that, if he lost the boardroom battle, then Hoddle's days as the Chelsea manager would be numbered.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SHOPPING

Presents for the pet with everything

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PLUS: Pampering for weary shoppers, page 6

OUTDOORS

Why mistletoe needs the kiss of life

Page 4

PLUS: Derwent May's Feather Report, page 4

TRAVEL

Christmas holiday outings for all the family

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PLUS: Venezuela and China, pages 18, 19

PROPERTY

British country estates: divided they fall

Pages 12, 13

PLUS: Terrace houses for sale, page 13

WEEKEND

THE TIMES SATURDAY DECEMBER 9 1995

YES, THERE'S STILL TIME TO MAKE ONE

By Frances Bissell

Life is not too short to make a Christmas pudding, nor is it too late to make one for this year. Traditional cooks may have stirred up their pudding weeks ago but last-minute cooks can, with the foolproof recipes over the page, produce a perfect, low-fat pud — and cake — in time for Christmas.

In fact, attempting your Christmas baking early in the season means the shops may not yet have stocks of all the dried fruits you might want to use. There are still plenty about now — I know, because I am in the middle of Christmas cooking for a television series in the West Country.

Dried blueberries, cranberries, cherries, pineapple, mango and papaya — in addition to the more customary raisins, sultanas, currants and mixed peel — go into my puds, cakes and mincemeat. Hardly traditional, but I am convinced Mrs Glasse, Miss Acton and Mrs Beeton would have used them, had they been available in their day.

Everyone has their own version of Christmas pudding. I developed my recipe for a virtually fat-free pudding in 1987 during my first year as The Times Cook. In truth I had never really liked Christmas puddings much. I found them dark, heavy, rich and almost bitter. So rather than adapting an existing recipe, I started from scratch and thought about the flavours and fruit that I like. For one thing prunes had to go in, as I wanted it to be a real, old-fashioned plum pudding. And then plenty of orange and almond flavours; hence the orange liqueur, orange juice and zest, and the marmalade. I used this because when I was first testing the recipe, I didn't have mixed peel.

Marmalade is fine. But so too would be crystallised or preserved oranges or kumquats. The thing is not to be too hidebound by the recipe. As long as you have roughly the same amount of dried fruit and solids as in my recipe, the pudding will work. If you can get lexia or muscatel raisins, use them, but if not ordinary raisins will be fine.

Without high levels of sugar, the pudding does not have excellent storage qualities. It will happily keep for a few weeks, if not months, but it does not have the two-year shelf life of the normal commercial pudding. Two weeks' keeping time will be adequate. There would, of course, be no harm in giving it an extra measure of spirit or fruit cordial to enrich it further, if you have any doubt.

While you are buying the dried fruit, nuts and spices for the pudding it is easy to buy enough to make a Christmas cake.

In response to readers' requests, I have also developed a low-fat Christmas cake. It works. It does the job. It is the right shape. But it does not have that rich, buttery, melting texture. If that is what you require from your Christmas cake, stick to a more traditional recipe and just eat a smaller slice.

Home-made mincemeat is a delight and extraordinarily easy to make. Over the years, I have made rich vegetarian mincemeat — the vegetarian variety can be every bit as luxurious as the suet version — and *à la carte* mincemeat, where you make up a basic recipe, and then add extra ingredients each time you want to use it. This year it is

Continued on page 3, col 1

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CHOICE

Planning to see a show or a film, an exhibition or a concert? *The Times* critics select the best entertainment

GALLERIES

Richard Cork

WESTMINSTER KINGS: So much of our medieval sculpture was destroyed in the Reformation that the survival of the full length statues in Westminster Hall seems miraculous. They all portray kings, which must have helped to ensure their safety. But until now, dirt and deterioration sadly impaired their attraction. Recent restoration has transformed them, and they stand as the centrepiece of a fascinating exhibition. The fate of the Old Palace of Westminster, largely destroyed by fire in 1834, is explored in detail. Only fragments remain from the decorations that once embellished the medieval chapel. But the British Museum has acquired two of the paintings rescued from the flames, and the wealth of other images brings the whole period back to life.
British Museum (0171-323 8525) until Jan 14.

FEMININE-MASCULINE: Crowds have been thronging the Pompidou Centre's latest gargantuan survey in Paris. Subtitled the Sex of Art, the show's ability to attract queues is scarcely surprising. But visitors are more likely to be disturbed than aroused. Most of the artists on view are troubled by the naked human body. Picasso emphasises the violence inherent in a couple's seaside embrace. And Louise Bourgeois creates a beast with clawed feet, sprouting a cluster of breasts from its torso. Long before the 500 works on view have been examined, a sense of surfeit sets in. Too many private parts are flaunted, and it is a relief to enter a section called Identities and Masquerades. Here Duchamp and Warhol entertain us by posing in drag, both utterly deadpan but enjoying themselves enormously. With the present unrest in Paris, it would be advisable to ring before going.
Pompidou Centre, Paris (00 33 1 4478 4648) until Feb 12.

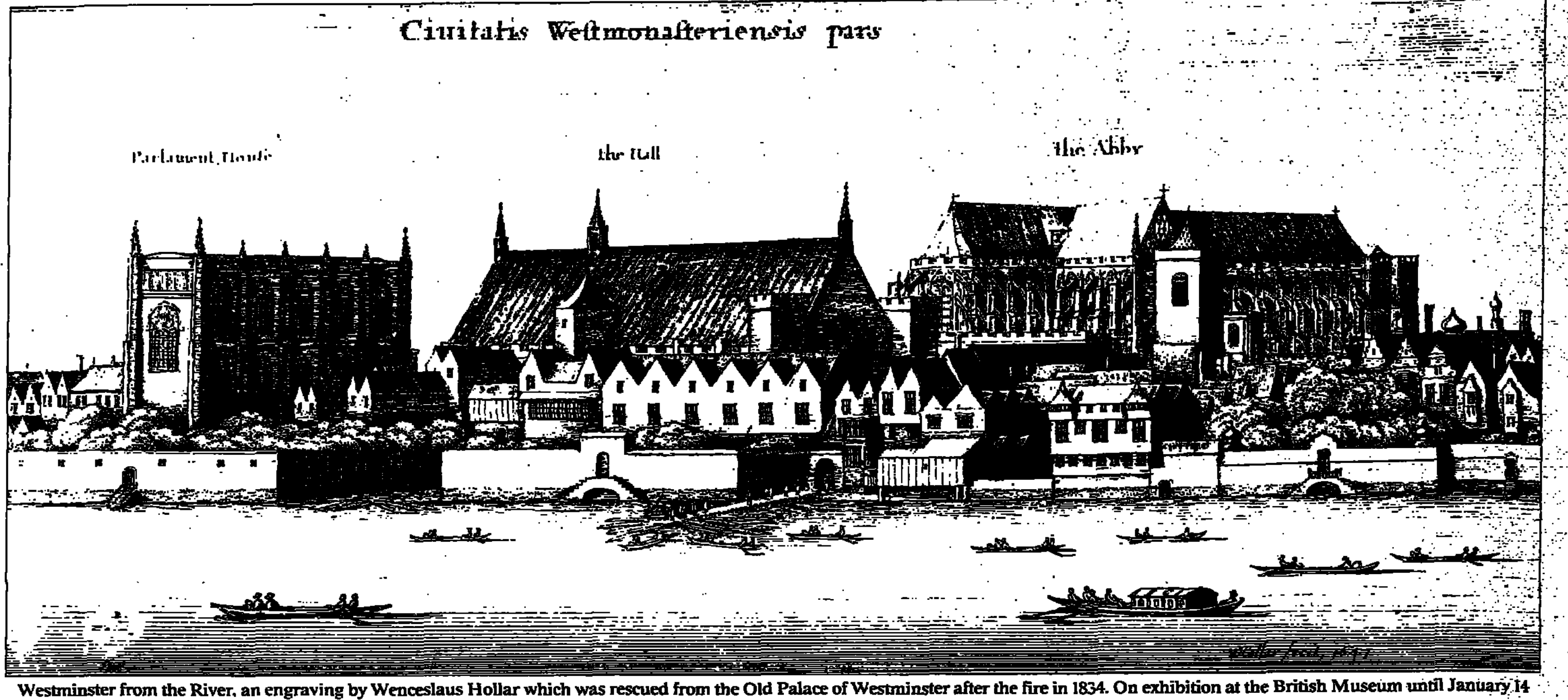
THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

THE JUNGLE BOOK: Tim Supple's resourceful version of the Mowgli tales keeps as close to the original as his staging of the Brothers Grimm last year, and makes as strong an appeal to imaginations young and old. In defiance of sentiment, squeamishness and political correctness, hunting, killing and eating are all seen as natural parts of a tough but just Law of the Jungle. So there's no doubting what the python Kaa — here a big, sinister cove flourishing a long pole — plans to do to the monkeys who scuttle with torches above a plain, red-earth stage: and quite right too.
Young Vic, The Cut, London SE1 (0171-928 6363). Evenings, tonight, Sat, Fri 15 and Sat 16 at 7pm; matinées, today, Sat, Tues 12, Thurs 14 and Sat 16 at 2.30pm, Mon 11 and Wed 13 at 1.30pm; mornings, Tues 12 and Thurs 14 at 10.30am.

THREE TALL WOMEN: Not much longer in which to catch Maggie Smith giving one of the richest performances of her career. In part one of Edward Albee's fine play we see her crankily teetering on the edge of oblivion; in part two, we get a funny, humane analysis of her life as she warily watches Sara Kestelman and Samantha Bond, who take the roles of herself in middle age and as a young woman: each time she is superb.
Wyndhams, Charing Cross Road, London WC2 (0171-369 1736). Evenings, Tues to Sat at 8pm; matinees, Wed and Sat at 3pm.

BRITISH MUSEUM



Westminster from the River, an engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar which was rescued from the Old Palace of Westminster after the fire in 1834. On exhibition at the British Museum until January 14

OPERA

Rodney Milnes

LA BELLE VIVETTE: Otherwise known as *La Belle Hélène*, the ENO's Christmas show is an adaptation by Michael Frayn of Offenbach's original, with 19th-century jokes taken out and doubtless some 20th-century ones inserted — Frayn being one of the great comic writers of the day. The show features the Coliseum's own megastar Lesley Garrett, with support from such experts as Neill Archer, Rosemary Ashe, Ryland Davies and Andrew Shore. The director is Ian Judge, purveyor of many an RSC spectacular, and James Holmes conducts. Whatever else, it won't be boring.
Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, London WC2 (0171-632 8300), Dec 11, 13, 14, 7.30pm. ♿

LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME/DIDO AND AENEAS: Lina Lalandi's quixotically heroic English Bach Festival got in first with the Purcell celebrations, staging *The Fairy Queen* a good year ago, and returns to wrap it all up with a one-night stand of Tom Hawkes's production of *Dido*, starring Della Jones — but in a double-bill with a nearly all-French production of the Molière-Lully *comédie ballet*. French Baroque expert Alain Germain is the director, Jean-Claude Malgoire conducts and Yves Gourvil plays Jourdain. Graeme Broadbent adds an Anglo-Saxon element as the Mufti. Not to be missed.
Royal Opera House, Bow St, London WC2 (0171-304 4000), tomorrow, Sun, 6.30pm. ♿

ROCK

David Sinclair

BLACK GRAPE: Anyone who has enjoyed the preposterous video for their current hit, *Kelly's Heroes*, or heard their No 1 album, *It's Great When You're Straight... Yeah*, will know what to expect from Black Grape's latest round of shows. A funk-rock rhythm section, a non-stop baggy two-step display by Bez, prolonged rap and repartee from Shaun Ryder and Kermit, and a raucous good time.
Brixton Academy, London SW9 (0171-924 9999), Dec 15, 16; **Newport Leisure Centre** (01633 841522), Dec 18; **Wolverhampton Civic Hall** (01902 312030), Dec 19; **Manchester Apollo** (0161-273 3775), Dec 21; **Forum**, Livingston (01506 419191), Dec 22; **Wembley Arena** with the Stone Roses (0181-900 1234), Dec 28.

MADNESS: The nutty north Londoners may be defunct as a recording act, and vocalist Suggs's recent solo album was a bit of a damp squib. But their Christmas reunion shows are turning into an institution. And when the original seven-man line-up takes the stage, the old magic is still there.
Point, Dublin (00 35 31 836 3633), Dec 14; **Dundonald International Ice Bowl**, Belfast (01232 482611), Dec 15; **G-Mex**, Manchester (0161-832 9000), Dec 17; **Newcastle Arena** (0191-401 8000), Dec 18; **NEC**, Birmingham (0121-780 4133), Dec 19; **Bournemouth International Centre** (01202 297297), Dec 21; **Wembley Arena** (0181-900 1234), Dec 22, 23.

Suggs brings Madness back together for Christmas

MUSEUMS

John Russell Taylor

THE GLORY OF THE TEMPLE AND THE STAGE: The 300th anniversary of the death of Henry Purcell on November 21 has provoked something approaching a Purcell year. The big winter exhibition at the British Library gathers together all Purcell's important surviving manuscripts along with early printed editions of his music, supported by a variety of documentary material about his life and background. His extensive theatrical work bulks as large as his work with the Chapel Royal under Charles II, James II and William and Mary. The manuscripts, including the recently discovered volume of keyboard music acquired by the British Library earlier this year, are very revealing of his attitudes and influences.
The British Library Exhibition Galleries, Great Russell Street, London WC1 (0171-412 7111) Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2.30-6pm, until Feb 18; closed Dec 24-26, Jan 1.

TERRY FROST: The 80th birthday of the St Ives-based artist Terry Frost has inspired a number of exhibitions all over the country, but none quite like that at Banbury Museum. Frost was actually born in Leamington Spa, and lived with his family in Banbury from 1963 to 1974. The exhibition has a local flavour, put together from work Frost did in Banbury and work still in the private collections of his Banbury friends. It also explores the basis of some of his abstract imagery in local sights, such as the hanging Civil War banners at Compton Wynyates and the triangular trademarks of Banbury lorries.
Banbury Museum, 8 Horsefair, Banbury, (01295 259855) Tues-Sat, 10am-4.30pm, until Jan 27.

DANCE

John Percival

A CHRISTMAS CAROL: Christopher Gable's production for Northern Ballet Theatre, bringing Dickens's characters to the stage in lively manner, aided by Lez Brotherston's inventive designs and a score by Carl Davies, is sold out at Sheffield. It returns to the repertoire for Christmas and the New Year.
Lyceum, Sheffield (0114-276 9922); Tues-Sat Dec 12-16, 7.45pm, matinées Thurs Dec 14 and Sat Dec 16, 2pm. **Edinburgh Festival Theatre** (0131-529 6000) Jan 3-13, 7.30pm, matinées Thurs Jan 4 and 11, 2pm; Sat Jan 6, 13., 2.30pm.

MR WORLDLY WISE: Twyla Tharp's new work for the Royal Ballet scores a triple first: her first three-act ballet, her first work for any British company and the Royal's first full-evening creation by an outside choreographer. Set to music by Rossini, it apparently draws on aspects of his life but without a narrative plot. Expect a wide range of moods from this American choreographer, including some that get the dancers moving at full stretch. Darcey Bussell, Irek Mukhamedov and Tetsuya Kumakawa lead a cast of 30 and Paul Murphy conducts. Tonight's premiere is sold out except for standing room and rear amphitheatre, but the remaining five performances are available at bargain prices in the hope of reaching a lively new audience.

Irek Mukhamedov rehearses for *Mr Worldly Wise*

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2 (0171-304 4000); Tonight, Sat, at 7pm, Dec 15, 18, 20 and Jan 3 and 4 at 7.30pm.

CLASSICAL

Richard Morrison

BARBIROLLI REMEMBERED: One of the century's most charismatic conductors, Sir John Barbirolli, is celebrated in this London Philharmonic concert. The programme is undoubtedly Barbirollian: Elgar's First Symphony and Brahms's Second Piano Concerto. Whether or not the conductor Zubin Mehta and soloist Daniel Barenboim can infuse it with Barbirolli's special brand of warmth and fervour remains to be heard. One thing is certain: the players of the London Philharmonic are in desperate need of more concerts with this kind of box-office appeal to see them through this dark era in their history. Support them!
Festival Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-928 8800), Wed, 7.30pm.

CBSO PREMIERE: The Feeney Trust has paid for the first performances of several outstanding pieces of music in recent years. This week we hear the premiere of the latest Feeney commission, *Forest*, a new work by the Scottish composer Judith Weir, best known for quirky and imaginative operas such as *Nights at the Chinese Opera*. Also in the programme is Mahler's great song-cycle, *Das Lied von der Erde*, the "Song of the Earth", sung by two fine soloists, Peter Seiffert and Thomas Hampson.
Symphony Hall, Birmingham (0121-212 3333), Dec 13, 7.30pm (repeated Tues 19).

JAZZ AND CABARET

Clive Davis

WARREN VACHE: Just as Scott Hamilton carries the flag for the tenor saxophone revivalists, so his fellow-American Warren Vaché celebrates the noble traditions of that now rarely sighted instrument, the cornet. A full-toned, romantic player who seems to be taking on the mantle of the great Ruby Braff, Vaché has turned up on countless mainstream albums, never wasting a note in his solos. His band during his Soho residency will include his old colleague, the pianist Brian Lemon.
Pizza Express, Dean St, London W1 (0171-439 8722) Dec 13-17 from 8.30pm.
(Information on possible provincial dates: 0181-362 5242/368 1299.)

ROBERT HABERMANN/CARMEN LUNDY: This Tuesday, as everyone must know by now, marks the 80th birthday of the colossus of popular song, Frank Sinatra. Rather than listening to that ill-judged *My Way* duet with Pavarotti, Frankophiles can take the opportunity to hear Robert Habermann recreate the greatest hits from the Capitol and Reprise years. A product of the Sarah Vaughan school of jazz divas, Carmen Lundy is, along with the mercurial expatriate Dee Dee Bridgewater, at the head of the new crop of American singers. Though her recent album, *Self Portrait*, was burdened with some workmanlike original tunes, her standards left most critics bedazzled.
***Habermann:* Purcell Room**, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-960 4242), Tues, Dec 12.
***Lundy:* Jazz Café**, Parkway, London NW1 (0171-344 0044) Dec 15-17.

FILM

Geoff Brown

MURDER IN THE FIRST (15): Though its show-off director Marc Rocco causes some distraction, this is still an absorbing drama. Kevin Bacon plays the Alcatraz prisoner who faces a charge of first-degree murder after he attacks an inmate. Christian Slater is the public defender who takes up his case. No big dramatic surprises are pulled, but such is the force of Bacon's performance as the hard-bitten prisoner who keeps his dignity that you only notice this once the film is over. With Gary Oldman.
Clapham Picture House (0171-498 3323) **MGMs: Fulham Road** (0171-370 2636) **Haymarket** (0171-839 1527) **Odeon Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

UNSTRUNG HEROES (PG): Eccentricity runs rife through Diane Keaton's first cinema feature as director, a bitter-sweet drama about a 12-year-old's bizarre family life. It's not any old life: when his mother is incapacitated by illness the boy moves in with two crazy uncles, who spend their days absorbed by paranoia, piles of newspapers, and a collection of rubber balls from sewers. Richard LaGravenese's clever script avoids any excesses of sentiment, and places this skewered American family firmly in the shadow of the repressed and fearful 1950s. A lighter touch from John Turturro (the father) would help, but the rest of cast — Andie MacDowell, Nathan Watt, Michael Richards and Maury Chaykin — give a special glow to an unusual and attractive film.
MGM Tottenham Court Road (0171-636 6148) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121) **Screen/Hill** ♿ (0171-435 3366)

WEST END THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London
■ House full, returns only ◪ Some seats available ☐ Seats at all prices

BALLAD OF WOLVES. The second of Valle Inclan's Don Juan plays turns the hero into a social rebel, fighting the Church and his greedy sons. Strong, though still puzzling stuff
Gate, 11 Pembridge Road, W11 (0171-229 0706) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm.

◪ **A CHRISTMAS CAROL.** Revival of Ian Judge's popular but over-sweet production. Clive Francis plays Scrooge
Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-638 8891) Mon-Sat, 7.15pm, mats Thurs and Sat, and Dec 19 and Jan 2, 2pm. Until Jan 13 ♿

◪ **COMPANY.** Sheila Gish and Adrian Lester in the cast of 14 for Sondheim's bittersweet musical on love, relationships and staying single. Sam Mendes directs
Donmar Warehouse, Earlham Street, WC2 (0171-369 1732) Now previewing, 7.30pm. Opens Dec 13, 7pm. ♿

☐ **DEAD FUNNY** Belinda Lang, Kevin McNally and Sam Kelly in Terry Johnson's sharply funny play about comics and some of their fans.
Savoy, The Strand, WC2 (0171-836 8888). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 8.15pm, mats Wed, 2.30pm and Sat, 5pm ♿

◪ **DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS** Shared Experience back in town with O'Neill's passionate drama of father-son rivalry and forbidden love. Nancy Meckler directs powerful acting, updated to Ireland in the 1950s.
Tricycle, Kilburn High Road, NW6 (0171-328 1000) Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Dec 6, 2pm and Sat, 4pm ♿

◪ **THE GLASS MENAGERIE.** Welcome transfer from the Donmar for Sam Mendes's radiant production. Zoe Wanamaker and Claire Skinner continue as mother and daughter. Ben Walden comes in as the new Tom
Comedy, Panton Street, SW1 (0171-369 1731). Now previewing, 7.30pm, opens Mon. Then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Sat, plus Dec 28 and Jan 4, 3pm.

◪ **HANSEL AND GRETEL.** Red Shift and Pop Up create a new version of the story, set in present day Kiev. Kiev in 1946, and the Worm Wood of fairy tales and gingerbread houses.
Lyric, King Street, Hammersmith, W6 (0181-741 2311) Today, 2.30 and 7pm Until Jan 6 ♿

☐ **KNIVES IN HENS** The dark, repressed, religious past of Scotland, where murder brings freedom and growth. Interesting and unusual David Harrower play.
Bush, Shepherds Bush Green, W12 (0181-743 3388) Mon-Sat, 8pm

☐ **HOBSON'S CHOICE** Leo McKern in the title role of Harold Brighouse's warm-hearted comedy. Nichola McAuliffe and Graham Turner (who remain in the cast) excellent as daughter and son-in-law. Frank Thornton takes over from McKern on Monday
Lyric, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (0171-494 5045). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, Sat, 3pm ♿

A scene from *Jungle Book* (see Choice, above)

☐ **HYSTERIA.** Henry Goodman plays Freud, with Tim Potter as Salvador Dali in Terry Johnson's surreal, double award-winner. The funniest serious play in London
Duke of Yorks, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-836 5122) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Thurs and Sat, 3pm ♿

◪ **AN INSPECTOR CALLS.** Stephen Daldry's powerful production, with Nicholas Woodeson as the all-knowing Inspector, and Edward Peel and Susan Engel as the pillars of society
Garrick, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-494 5085) Mon-Fri, 7.45pm, Sat, 8.15pm, mats Wed, 2.30pm, Sat, 5pm

☐ **JOLSON** The highs and lows of the singer with with a monster ego. Brian Conloy belts out the songs enjoyably and Sally Ann Triplett is an impressive Ruby Keeler
Victoria Palace, Victoria Street, SW1 (0171-834 1317) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Wed and Sat, 3pm ♿

☐ **THE MASTER BUILDER** Peter Hall's sexually understated production. Alan Bates the smouldering hero, fine performances by Gemma Jones and Victoria Hamilton.
Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1 (0171-930 8800), Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mats Wed and Sat, 3pm ♿

◪ **ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD** Adrian Scarborough and Simon Russell Beale play Stoppard's attendant lords in Matthew Francis's directional debut here
National (Lyttelton), South Bank, SE1 (0171-928 2252) Now previewing, 7.30pm. Opens Dec 14, 7pm. ♿

◪ **THE SHAKESPEARE REVUE** A witty evening of song, dance and sketches to do with William S. Assembled by Christopher Luscombe, Malcolm McKee
Vaudeville, Strand, WC2 (0171-836 9987). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 8.30pm, mats Wed, 2.30pm and Sat, 5.30pm

☐ **THE SIMPLETON OF THE UNEXPECTED ISLES** Written when Shaw was 78 and never publicly performed in London. Kate O'Mara and Raad Rawi play Priestess and Priest of a perfect society, just as an angel announces the Day of Judgement. Sam Walters directs a true rarity
Orange Tree, Clarence Street, Richmond (0181-940 3633) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mats Dec 28, Jan 4 and 11, 2.30pm, Sat, 4pm ♿

☐ **SOUTH PACIFIC**: Patti Boulaye plays Bloody Mary and Peter Polycarpou, Emile, in Phil Willmott's production of the Rodgers & Hammerstein tropical evergreen
Drill Hall, Chenies Street, WC1 (0171-637 8270) Now previewing, tonight and tomorrow, 7.30pm. Opens Dec 12. Then Tue-Sat, and Jan 7 and 14, 7.30pm.

☐ **TAKING SIDES** Final performances for Ronald Harwood's enthralling drama, based on the investigations of Furtwangler's alleged Nazi sympathies. Superb performance by Daniel Massey as the conductor, with Michael Pennington as his philistine accuser
Criterion, Piccadilly Circus, WC2 (0171-369 1747) Today, 2.30 and 7.30pm

☐ **THE TOWER.** Alexandre Dumas's romantic melodrama, with Sinead Cusack as a scheming Queen Marguerite and Adrian Dunbar as the agent of her downfall. Howard Davies directs a version by Charles Wood
Almeida, Almeida Street, N1 (0171-359 4404) Now previewing, 7.30pm. Opens Dec 12, 7pm ♿

☐ **THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS** Jeremy Sinden plays the ebullient Toad in the now annual return of the National Theatre production. Less amazing stage effects here but still delightful.
Old Vic, Waterloo Rd, SE1 (0171-928 6655) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Wed and Sat, 2.30pm, mats daily in week of Dec 26, 2.30pm ♿

LONG RUNNERS

☐ **Blood Brothers** Phoenix (0171-867 1044) ◪ **Buddy** Strand (0171-930 8800) ◪ **Communicating Doors**: Gielgud (0171-494 5530) ☐ **Dead Guilty** Apollo (0171-494 5070) ☐ **Five Guys Named Moe** Albery (0171-369 1730) ◪ **Indian Ink**. Aldwych (0171-416 6003) ◪ **Oliver!**. Palladium (0171-494 5020) . . ◪ **Starlight Express**. Apollo Victoria (0171-828 8665) ◪ **Sunset Boulevard** Adelphi (0171-344 0055) ☐ **The Woman in Black** Fortune (0171-836 2238)

Ticket information supplied by Society of London Theatre

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated with the symbol ◆) on release across the country

NEW RELEASES

◆ **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT** (15) What happens when the widowed President gets a girlfriend? Not much, even with Michael Douglas and Annette Bening. Director, Rob Reiner.
Empire ♿ (0171-437 1234) **MGM Fulham Road** (0171-370 2636) **Trocadero** ♿ (0171-434 0031) **Odeon Kensington** (01426 914666) **Screen/Baker Street** (0171-935 2772) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

ANGELS AND INSECTS (18) Procreative games in Victorian England. Handsome but still drama, with Mark Rylance, Patsy Kensit and Kristin Scott Thomas. Director, Philip Haas
Curzon Mayfair (0171-369 1720) **MGM Fulham Road** (0171-370 2636) **Odeon Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098)

THE BROTHERS McMULLEN (15): Irish-Americans agonise over love, commitment and beer. Modest feature debut by writer-director-actor Edward Burns
Gate ♿ (0171-727 4043) **Lumiere** (0171-836 0691) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121) **Screen/Green** (0171-226 3520)

DR. JEKYLL AND MS. HYDE (12): Brash and unfunny comic update of Stevenson's story, with Tim Daly and Sean Young. Director, David Price
MGM Haymarket (0171-839 1527) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

UNSTRUNG HEROES (PG): See Critics' Choice, above

CURRENT

◆ **APOLLO 13** (PG) The near-fatal moon mission of 1970. Splendid images, but conventional drama. With Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon and Ed Harris; director, Ron Howard
Empire (0990 888990)

◆ **CANDYMAN 2** (18): Feeble adventures of the urban bogeyman created by Clive Barker. With Tony Todd, Kelly Rowan
MGM Trocadero ♿ (0171-434 0031) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

◆ **CLUELESS** (12) Frivolous fun of life and empty minds of Beverly Hills teenagers. With Alicia Silverstone
Warner ♿ (0171-437 4343)

◆ **CRIMSON TIDE** (15) Antique heroics in a nuclear submarine, with Gene Hackman and Denzel Washington. Director, Tony Scott.
MGMs: Baker Street (0171-935 9772) **Chelsea** (0171-352 5096) **Trocadero** ♿ (0171-434 0031) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Mezzanine** ♿ (01426 915683) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

ELISA (15) Overwrought French tale of a runaway kid who seeks out her father. With Vanessa Paradis, Gerard Depardieu. Director, Jean Becker
MGMs: Piccadilly (0171-437 3561) **Swiss Centre** (0171-439 4470)

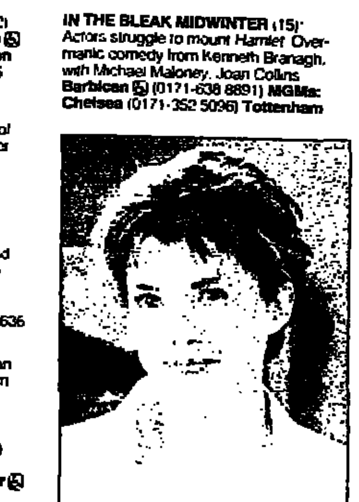
FARINELLI (15) The life of an 18th-century castrato. Lots of opera, sex and clothes, but Gerard Corbiau's film only scratches the material's potential.
Clapham Picture House (0171-498 3323) **MGM Tottenham Ct Rd** (0171-636 6148) **Minema** (0171-235 4225)

◆ **FRENCH KISS** (12) Dizzy Meg Ryan gets entangled with French rogue Kevin Kline. Charmless romantic comedy, directed by Lawrence Kasdan
MGM Trocadero ♿ (0171-434 0031) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

◆ **GOLDENEYE**. (12). Pierce Brosnan twinkles as the new James Bond. A rip-roaring thriller with a sense of humour, with Sean Bean. Director, Martin Campbell
Barbican ♿ (0171-638 8891) **Clapham Picture House** (0171-498 3323) **MGMs: Baker Street** (0171-935 9772) **Chelsea** (0171-352 5096) **Fulham Road** (0171-370 2636) **Notting Hill Coronet** ♿ (0171-727 6705) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Leicester Square** (01426 915683) **Marble Arch** (01426 914501) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

LAND FREEDOM (15): Ken Loach's powerful Spanish Civil War drama, with Ian Hart, Rosana Pastor.
Curzon Phoenix (0171-369 1721) **Odeon Mezzanine** ♿ (01426 915683) **Renoir** (0171-837 8402)

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER (15): Actors struggle to mount *Hamlet*. Over-manic comedy from Kenneth Branagh, with Michael Maloney, Joan Collins
Barbican ♿ (0171-638 8891) **MGMs: Chelsea** (0171-352 5096) **Tottenham Court Road** (0171-636 6148) **Odeons: Haymarket** (01426 915353) **Kensington** (01426 914666) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **Phoenix** (0181-883 2233) **Richmond** (0181-332 0030) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121)



Annette Bening in *The American President*

LIVING IN OBLIVION (15) Trials and tribulations of making a low-budget movie. Delicious comedy from director Tom DiCillo, with Steve Buscemi
MGMs: Panton St (0171-930 0631)

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE (U): John Ford's wonderful 1946 western about Wyatt Earp, with Henry Fonda, Linda Darnell and Victor Mature.
Renoir (0171-837 8402)

◆ **POCAHONTAS** (U). Strangely dull slice of American history: a backward step for Disney cartoons after *Aladdin* and *The Lion King*.
MGM Chelsea (0171-352 5096) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

◆ **THE SANTA CLAUSE** (U). Divorced dad becomes the new Santa. Broad family comedy with a human face, featuring Tim Allen. Director, John Pasquin.
MGM Chelsea (0171-352 5096) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **West End** (01426 915574) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

SHANGHAI TRIAD (15). Enjoyably opulent gangster saga from Chinese director Zhang Yimou. With Gong Li.
Chelsea (0171-351 3742) **Clapham Picture House** (0171-498 3323) **Curzon West End** (0171-369 1722)

SISTER MY SISTER (15): Modest chamber piece about a stifling French household. With Joely Richardson, Jodhi May and Julie Walters. Director, Nancy Meckler
MGMs: Haymarket (0171-839 1527) **Tottenham Court Rd** (0171-636 6148)

◆ **TO DIE FOR** (15): Delicious social satire about a television weather girl's murderous lust for glory. Gus Van Sant directs Nicole Kidman and Matt Dillon.
Odeons: Kensington (01426 914666) **Mezzanine** ♿ (01426 915683) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

◆ **A WALK IN THE CLOUDS** (PG): Vacuous 1940s romance with Keanu Reeves as a returning soldier who finds a new life in California's vineyards. Director, Alfonso Arau
MGM Trocadero ♿ (0171-434 0031) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

WHEN NIGHT IS FALLING (18): Canadian lesbian drama with a good heart but too much flimsy whimsy. Writer-director, Patricia Rozema (*I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*).
MGM Piccadilly (0171-437 3561)

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Frances Bissell's Christmas pud

(serves 8 to 10)

THE ONLY fat comes from the egg yolks, and the only sugar from the dried fruits, the small amount of marmalade, or candied peel, and the fortified wine. The pudding is also high in fibre from the wholemeal breadcrumbs and the dried fruit. It is also absolutely delicious, full of flavour and moistness. Since it contains prunes, this can truly be called a plum pudding.

225g/8oz fresh wholemeal breadcrumbs
225g/8oz roughly chopped muscatel raisins
225g/8oz roughly chopped sultanas
225g/8oz roughly chopped dried apricots
175g/6oz chopped pitted prunes
50g/2oz crumbled almond macaroons or Italian amaretti
50g/2oz chopped almonds
50g/2oz ground or flaked almonds
1 grated apple
1 tsp each ground cinnamon and mace
½ tsp each ground cardamom, cloves and allspice
2tbsp orange marmalade or candied orange peel
Juice and grated zest of 1 orange
4 size-3 free-range eggs
75ml/⅛ pint brandy
150ml/¼ pint fortified muscat wine, port, marsala OR oloroso sherry

Put all the dry ingredients in a large bowl, and mix thoroughly, either with a large wooden spoon or your hands. Put the marmalade, orange juice and zest, eggs, brandy and wine in another large bowl or in a blender or food processor, and beat until well blended and frothy. Pour the liquid over the dry ingredients. Mix again until the mixture is moist. Cover and let it stand for a couple of hours at least, and if possible, overnight to let the spice flavours develop.

Oil, or butter, the pudding basin or basins (the mixture fills a 1.75 litre basin/3 pint), and spoon in the mixture. As the pudding contains no raw flour, it is not going to expand very much during cooking, and you can fill the mixture to within 1.25cm/½in of the rim. Take a large square of greaseproof paper, oil or butter it, and tie it over the top of the pudding basin with string.

PLACE the basin in a saucepan, standing it on a long triple strip of foil to help you lift the hot basin out of the saucepan once cooked. Pour in boiling water to reach half way up the pudding basin, cover the saucepan, and bring it back to the boil. Lower the heat, keep water at a steady simmer, and steam the pudding for 2½-3 hours. Make sure the water is kept topped up. When the pudding is cooked, remove it from the pan, and allow it to cool completely before wrapping it, basin and all, in fresh greaseproof paper and foil.

When you want to serve it, steam for a further hour. You can use a pressure cooker for both stages, which will greatly reduce the cooking times. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Festive feast: there is still time to have yourself a home-made Christmas with Frances Bissell's recipes

Mincemeat

A LA CARTE MINCEMEAT

(makes about 3lb/1.35kg)

225g/½lb each dried apricots or stoned prunes, raisins, dates, sultanas and currants
225g/½lb shredded beef or vegetarian suet OR 8tbsp ground nut oil OR
225g/½lb grated coconut cream
100g/4oz demerara sugar
100g/4oz chopped mixed peel
100g/4oz fine cut orange or lemon marmalade
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon and 1 orange
1 tsp ground mixed spice
½ tsp ground cardamom
150ml/¼ pint rum or brandy
150ml/¼ pint oloroso or cream sherry or port

CHOP or mince the dried fruit, and then mix all the ingredients, and leave, covered in a bowl, for 2 to 3 days before potting and labelling.

When you wish to use the mincemeat, spoon out about ½lb/225g into a bowl. That, mixed together with one of the following, will fill 12 to 18 mince pies: 1 Bramley or russet apple, peeled, cored and grated, and mixed with 3oz/75g flaked almonds; 1 or 2 Conference pears, peeled, cored and grated, and mixed with 15g/½oz fresh, grated ginger, or stem ginger, or with dried cranberries, cherries or blueberries; half a medium-sized pineapple, peeled, cored and chopped, and mixed with a handful of pinenuts, finely chopped brazil nuts or desiccated coconut; 75g to 100g/3-4oz dried mango, chopped, and mixed with a handful of chopped cashew nuts; 125g/4oz fresh cranberries, cooked in a little orange juice until they pop and mixed together with chopped mandarin segments and grated zest or chopped kumquats.

TROPICAL FRUIT MINCEMEAT

(makes 2 x 500g/1lb jars)
Suitable for vegetarians

1 lemon
200g/7oz dark muscovado sugar
500g/generous 1lb dried fruit chosen from the following and chopped into small pieces: mango, papaya, banana, dates, figs and pineapple
225g/8oz fresh fruit, finely chopped, from the following: pineapple, physalis, guava
100g/4oz creamed coconut, grated
50g/2oz chopped blanched almonds
½ tsp each: ground cardamom, cinnamon, cloves and mace
2 to 3 tbsp dark rum, optional

Scrub the lemon, grate the zest, and squeeze the juice into a bowl. Thoroughly mix in the rest of the ingredients, and leave overnight for before potting, sealing and labelling.

Special lower fat Christmas cake

THIS IS the special Christmas cake recipe without added sugar or egg yolks and with a lower fat content than the traditional Christmas cake recipe.

Readers should be aware that a rather different cake is the result. There will be no glossy, burnished, slightly sticky surface to the cake, because there is no added sugar or syrup. The surface is matt, rather dry and somewhat crisp. Wrapping the cake and storing it for two weeks after baking will redistribute the moisture. In addition you can feed the cake with extra spirits or a good sherry. The cake will be paler, because sugar, usually one of the darker varieties, also adds colour.

The eating quality or "mouth feel" is different too, as it does not have the same crumb texture as the traditional cake. However, for those who are unable, for dietary reasons, to eat the real thing, this cake recipe produces Bissell's Special Christmas Cake:

100g/4oz dried apricots
175g/6oz dried bananas
100g/4oz currants
175g/6oz dried dates
100g/4oz dried figs
175g/6oz pitted prunes
175g/6oz raisins
175mls/6fl oz calvados, whisky, rum, or brandy (cognac)
1 tsp ground allspice
½ tsp each of ground cinnamon, ground mace, ground cardamon and ground ginger,
grated zest of 2 lemons and 2 oranges

Chop the dried fruit to even-sized pieces, and soak overnight in the spirits, mixed with the spices and zest. Next day, pour over the fruit the following ingredients:

175ml/6fl oz hot Earl Grey or Jasmine tea
175ml/6fl oz pineapple, apple or other naturally sweet, but not sweetened, fruit juice.
(Lemon and orange juice should not be used, as these are too tart, but some of the tropical fruit juices, to be found in health-food shops are excellent in fruit cakes and puddings.)

Blend together the following until smooth;

5 tbsp skimmed milk
150g/5oz cottage cheese or silken tofu, available from health-food stores

and into this beat:

200g/7oz softened unsalted butter or polyunsaturated margarine.
If you wish, you can replace half the yellow fat with smooth, unsalted peanut butter, or tahini (sesame) paste, available from health-food shops.

Add:

2 peeled and finely grated carrots
100g/4oz ground almonds

Gradually fold in:

225g/8oz sifted plain flour

alternating the flour with the soaked dried fruit. Then add:

110g/¼lb flaked almonds
175g/6oz chopped walnuts or hazelnuts

Finally fold in:

5 free-range egg whites (size 3), whisked to firm peaks.

Spoon into a loose-bottomed cake tin, 23cm/9in round tin, or 20.5cm/8in square lined with at least two layers of greaseproof paper. Smooth the top, and bake for about 2½-3 hours in a moderate oven at 180C/350F, gas mark 4, and turn down to 150C/300F, gas mark 3, after an hour or so. A skewer inserted in the middle of the cake will emerge clean when baked through.

Cover the top of the cake with three or four layers of greaseproof paper to prevent it from browning too much during baking. Slide the cake, still on the base, out of the tin when cool. Make a few holes in the top of the cake, and pour on a little more spirit before wrapping in fresh greaseproof paper and foil. Then store in a cool, dry place. The cake could stand a further feed a week before Christmas.

The recipe was tested using dried fruit, not the pre-soaked, ready-to-eat variety. If you use any pre-soaked fruit, do not soak overnight.

● *Today's pudding, cake and other Christmas recipes can be found in more permanent form in* The Times Cookbook *by Frances Bissell, recently published in paperback by Chatto & Windus (£15).*

Continued from page 1

tropical fruit mincemeat, which is not only rich and luxurious, but also suitable for vegetarians since it uses not suet but grated coconut cream. (The recipes for *à la carte* and tropical fruit mincemeat are featured on the right.) Make some for yourself, and some for your friends. Also to be shared are some simple recipes for flavoured butters, to serve with the Christmas pudding.

Recently, I realised just how very English this kind of food is. I was cooking in the kitchens of the Hotel George V in Paris for a week, making scones, biscuits, cakes, tea breads and fruit cakes. Where was the mixed peel? The treacle? The golden syrup? The unrefined sugars, ranging from the lightest caster sugar to the dark molasses? How could I make my brandy snaps and ginger cakes, not to mention Christmas cakes? "Heureusement pour Marks et Spencaire", we found golden syrup, clotted cream for the scones, and so the baking proceeded.

I was surprised to discover that we seem to have a much richer variety of these ingredients. Quite honestly, I thought "les cakes", French-style, rather poor copies of our fruit cakes, full of bright pink glacé cherries, and vivid green angelica and not much else.

For all their jokes about "la cuisine anglaise", I think the French do like our homely cakes and puddings. Mine were certainly well received at the Hotel George V. And it was a Frenchman, François Misson, a 17th-century traveller and chronicler, who went into raptures about the English pudding, declaring: "Blessed be he that invented pudding, for it is a manna that hits the palates of all sorts of people."

These are easy recipes. It is never too late to start cooking for Christmas. It can hardly be considered a chore: imagine being enveloped in the scent of sweet, warm spices, ripe fruit and fragrant liqueurs. What could be more pleasant on a cold, winter weekend afternoon?

Cover photograph and main photograph on this page by MARK HARRISON

Two flavoured butters

MANDARIN BUTTER

225g/½lb unsalted butter
175g/6oz icing sugar, sifted
pinch of ground mace
4 tbsp Mandarine Napoléon liqueur
2 tbsp cognac

SHERRY BUTTER

225g/½lb unsalted butter
200g/7oz icing sugar, sifted
pinch of cinnamon
4tbsp dry oloroso sherry
2tbsp Brandy de Jerez

IN EACH case make sure that all the ingredients are at room temperature. Blend them until smooth, pack into pots or jars, seal, label, and refrigerate until required. If you start with the butter at room temperature, and use a food processor, these recipes can be made very quickly.

Ruth Gledhill gives thanks for (almost) all creatures great and small

Snakes alive, it's Advent

RESISTING the urge to run away when an innocent-looking boy turned up with what looked horribly like a rat and sat it on his knee in the pew in front of me, I lifted my feet on to the wooden kneeler and prayed as hard as I could for all God's creatures.

This church of St Stephen with St John, where the new bishop of London, the Right Rev Richard Chartres, was once vicar, had never seen anything like it. Instead of the incense I had expected at a church with a reputation as Catholic as this one, there was a host of country smells. We were at an animals-in-the-stable blessing service, to mark the start of Advent, and the only creatures more noisy than the beasts were the children and adult owners attempting to keep them at bay.

Standing watch at the rear were PCs Tony McMaster and Karen Jefford with their dapple grey police horses, Ogilvy and Ullswater, champing at the bit. Guarding them was Pin, the drugs-detecting spaniel recovering from being stung 400 times by wasps in a recent drugs raid after his handler, PC Geoff Arnold, mistook a massive wasps' nest for a lampshade. A collection of boxers, terriers, Alsatians, Jack Russells and various combinations of all these and more shivered with excitement, hung out their tongues and emitted high-pitched yelps at the tempting rabbits and hamsters in their midst. "I do not expect it to be a quiet service, nor do I expect it to be a particularly formal one," said the Rev Ralph Godsall, the vicar, as he welcomed the goldfish, frogs, mice, gerbils and tortoises.

I looked meaningfully at the rat as we listened to our first lesson, from Genesis, giving humans dominion "over every creeping thing that creepeth". With frightening sangfroid, the vicar launched us into an action song. "If I were a butterfly, I'd thank you Lord for giving me wings," we sang.

If animals can look incredulous, the 100-plus creatures present did just that as their owners proceeded to emulate fish, elephants, kangaroos, octopi, worms, billy goats and the "fuzzy wuzzy bear". Rex the white Alsation looked lop-sidedly amused and the rat just stared at me as we flapped our arms, waved, stamped feet and gesticulated.

Our second lesson was John Betjeman's *Diary of a Church Mouse* and after our next song, *From the Tiny Ant*, sung — of course — antiphonally, a human kangaroo strolled by, ascended the pulpit and removed his furry head to read from Charles Causley's *One day at a Perranporth Pet Shop*. So much noise erupted at the bizarre sight of this strange man-creature in the pulpit that I could not hear a word.

We sang another song, *All the animals that I have ever seen*, before we were introduced to the Animal Health Trust, the charity which cares for 3,500 animals a day and which was to benefit from the funds raised at the service. The vicar then blessed the animals and, miraculously, they quietened. As we sang *Away in a Manger*, he and his assistant moved up and down the aisles, using a peacock's tailfeather to sprinkle animals and humans with holy water, pronouncing blessings on us all.

"Inspire us to love all animals as a sign of the Father's love for us," said Mr Godsall before we said the Lord's Prayer. Our final hymn urged us to imagine a world with no flowers, sunshine, trees or animals, and to praise God.

Leaving St Stephen's for the frosty treeless, sunless street, I recalled the cosy stable-like warmth of the church and even managed a quick prayer of thanks for the rat.

Later, Mr Godsall, 47, formerly a country parson in the Wakefield diocese, said that he had the idea for an animal service after a small boy from one of the estates near by asked if he could bring his hampster to church.

"It snowballed from there. There are 7,000 people in this parish and an awful lot of animals. I was really surprised that central London had so many animals living in it. They are a channel that draw gracious living out of people. This is a busy community and can be anonymous, but people with animals stop and talk to each other and their neighbours. The service was about trying to foster greater neighbourliness, and it worked."

St Stephen with St John, Rochester Row, London SW1 (0171-834 0950)

AT YOUR SERVICE

A five-star guide

VICAR: The Rev Ralph Godsall

ARCHITECTURE: Grade-II listed building of the 1840s, which felt like the Ark. ★★★

SERMON: Inaudible.

LITURGY: Words and prayers buffeted by the turbulent noise. ★

MUSIC: Enjoyable attempts to sing animal songs, accompanied by barks, squeals and squeaks. ★★★

AFTER-SERVICE CARE: Collection for the work of the Animal Health Trust.

SPIRITUAL HIGH: Animated. ★★★★

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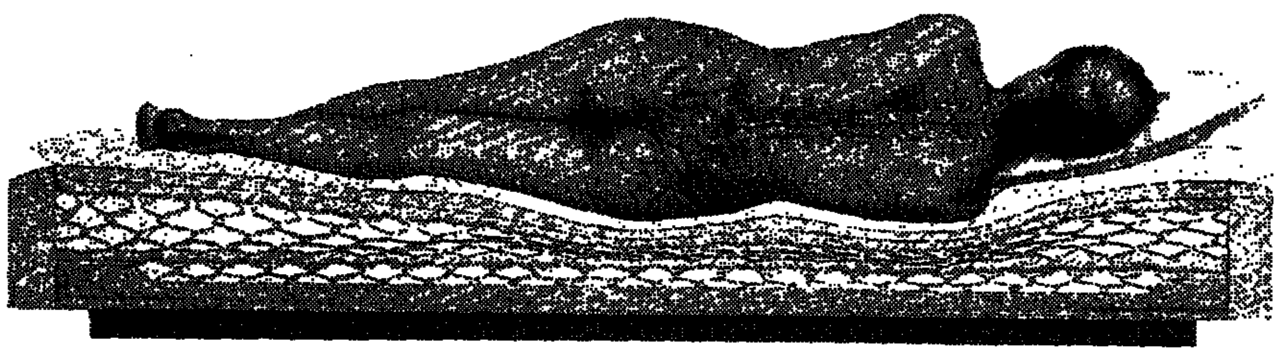

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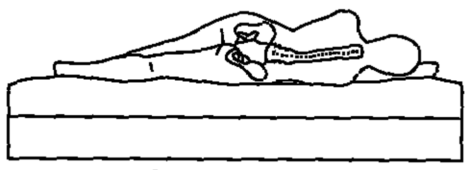

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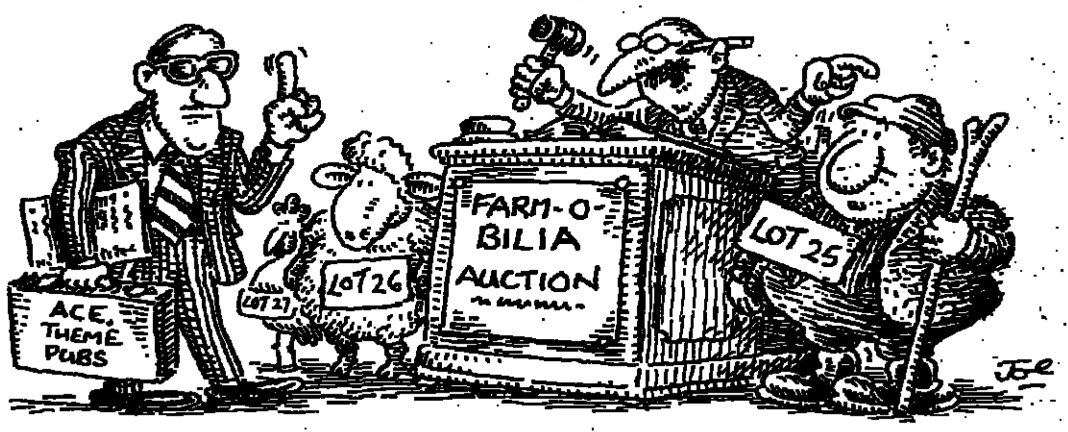
Shear perfection going for a song



FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HEINEY

Before the farm finally closes down, I really must ring one of the Bond Street auction houses to ensure that my works of art are disposed of in a manner that befits their true worth. I can picture the scene: bidders will be sitting, hushed and tight-lipped, those wispy, well-bred girls will be hanging on telephones listening for bids from the Amsterdam dealers, the auctioneer will take a sip of cooling water before braving himself to announce: "Lot 52. A fine example, possibly the only one of its kind still to be used, reputedly swung by the master of the craft, farmworker Dilly Sharp. One mangel-topping knife! About 1932. What am I offered? Twenty thousand guineas? Very well, a fiver anybody?"

You can laugh, but it is parting with my collection of little treasures that is more likely to bring a tear to the eye than closing the barn door for the last time. I cannot honestly say that I shall not feel much emotion at the thought of never having to hump lousy bales of straw again, but when I consider that I may have no further use for my bill-hook, finely honed sheep shears, or patent pig-catching device circa 1925, then I start to feel desperately sad.

To me, these farming hand-tools are true works of art. They have been developed and fine-tuned over centuries till a point about fifty years ago when they had reached the peak of their perfection. Then came the great eclipse: the huge mechanical shadow spread over them, and farmers threw their old friends aside to rust and rot.

Since I have been farming I have been rescuing tools like these with the fervour of a Salvationist saving souls. I have rummaged through scrap heaps if my eye has caught the rusty remains of a hedge slasher; I have stood at farm auctions frozen to the marrow, waiting for the very last lot which might have been a ditching shovel or a particularly fine example of a grain scoop.

I like to think I have been sensible about it. I have bought only things for which I thought I had a use. This policy has led to some anguished moments: I remember standing, torn, looking at a yoke as used by milkmaids to carry two pails of milk, one from each shoulder. Being prone to a stiff neck I doubted I would ever use it, nor did I expect it to get a particularly warm welcome from the farmer's wife, so I let it go. I still grieve.

But what is to happen to all these things now? The last place I want them to end up in is a museum, or worse, on the wall of a naffly rustic tea-shop, for they still have life in them. The fact that they are no longer in use is a reflection on the modern farmworker and not the tool. While casting round for a good idea as to where they might go, my mind skipped back to last summer and a visit I made to the Rural History Centre at Reading University. Here I was shown one of the most formidable agricultural archives in the country. Taken as a whole, you could think of it as an instruction book with which to build a complete replica of our farming history. But, more importantly, it was pointed out to me that although this represented recent history to us, to developing parts of the world it was a vision of the future. It might do no harm to remind ourselves at this point how far advanced our farming has become. This time last year I was in Romania, visiting an agricultural college where milking by hand was still taught, the reversible plough had yet to arrive and a newly erected safety poster warned of the dangers of bolting cart-horses.

Then think of parts of the African continent where even Eastern European farming methods would seem beyond reach. Is it possible that somewhere on that continent a life would be transformed by the gift of a mangel-topping knife? Quite possibly; think of the new life and hope that our simple gift of the cow, Tutti, gave to that Ugandan family. I hear her first calf, a young bull, is growing fast and will soon arrive at that point when he will join Send a Cow's village bull scheme and spread his good works so that other families will benefit from calves as yet unborn.

So here is an appeal. If you know of a charity who can help to find a good and useful home for a rag-bag of a collection of agricultural tools, I would be pleased to hear from them. It would give me lasting pleasure to think of those pitchforks, shovels, knives and spades which now lie idle in the barn being sent to a part of the world where they will once again find a purpose. Of course, the new owner will need lessons and although I have not spoken to Dilly, the septuagenarian mangel-chopping champion, I have no doubt he would be happy to pass on the benefit of his wisdom. Now there would be a cultural exchange.

Vanishing mistletoe gets the kiss of life

Apple trees and a little care are the keys to preserving the native variety

The mistletoe and holly tree auction at Tenbury Wells

If one of your New Year tasks is to cut down that decrepit apple tree at the bottom of the garden, stop. According to Jonathan Briggs, a conservationist, cultivated apple trees are the favoured host of the romantic, if semi-parasitic, mistletoe. A few of the translucent, creamy-white berries squashed into a crack in the bark and protected from frost could provide you with your own crop of this dwindling decoration for many Christmases to come.

"There are a lot of mysteries surrounding mistletoe," says Mr Briggs, "but its attraction to apple orchards is a key element. There are three times as many recorded on apple trees as on the next two host species, lime and hawthorn, and even crab apple is way down the list."

For the past two years Mr Briggs has been co-ordinating a survey for Plantlife, the conservation charity, and the Botanical Society of the British Isles into the distribution and habits of this little-known but widely mythologised plant.

He says: "There were all sorts of reports coming in of a drop in quantity because of apple orchard destruction. This doesn't necessarily mean that mistletoe is becoming scarce on its other hosts, but the harvestable supply may be declining. It is much easier to reach on an apple tree; on a poplar or lime it might be growing 30-40ft up."

So far findings are mixed, he says. "Since the last survey 25 years ago, not a lot has changed in its distribution — it is most prolific in the southern Welsh borders and parts of the West Country — but quantity is more difficult to assess."

Its scarcity in eastern England (even in Kent, noted for its orchards) is possibly due to foreign imports from across the Channel, a trade that has flourished for at least a century. Before that, there are reports from the 1860s that Hereford was Britain's main supplier. Although the home-grown mistletoe market at Tenbury Wells, Hereford and Worcester, still draws crowds, many of the sprigs in the shops come from Normandy.

French sprigs fetch a lower price per pound (no kilograms, note) but are sometimes spoiled by being tightly packed. Jonathan Briggs thinks British mistletoe may have been encouraged in apple orchards as a secondary crop in past winters, and could be again.

Another theory is that it was harvested at Christmas as a control measure. So a balance would have to be found between nurturing the photosynthesising parasite and maintaining the tree's health and productivity. Or redundant orchards could be used.

The host and its cling-on begin their long-term association when a germinating mistletoe seed sends out a root towards the tree, worming its way under the bark and into the living tissue. The plant shoots out runners under the bark to pop up elsewhere, like a strawberry plant. Weird and wonderful distortions often result and Mr Briggs has seen trees completely enveloped. This may partly explain why it was venerated by druids, especially when on an oak.

Like holly, mistletoe is not protected and can be freely gathered — if you can find it. For these reasons he advocates "selective pruning". Cutting back too hard may stop the plant in its tracks. The survey aims to find out if current cropping levels are sustainable and whether imported species are being planted to the detriment of local strains.

Perhaps it is just as well that the plant is no longer picked for medicinal purposes. A health manual of 1550 states that "mysceltowe layd to the head draweth out the corrupt humores", and as late as 1866 mistletoe found on oak had such a reputation for alleviating illnesses of old age that it was called *lignum sanctae crucis* — wood of the Holy Cross.

The relationship between mistletoe and the mistle thrush is another legend-strewn area. Aristotle noticed thrushes eating the sticky berries. His name for the bird, *viscivorus*, reflects the scientific name for the plant, *viscum*, and means "mistletoe eater". In the mid-18th century it was believed that the plant needed this particular bird to propagate it.

Jonathan Briggs's observations are that the mistle thrush, a bird that likes to guard all its food sources, finds a mistletoe bough easier to patrol than, say, a whole holly bush. Other birds cotton on to the fact that white berries are just as good to eat as red ones when they see a mistle thrush at work.

None of this explains why mistletoe is nowhere near as widely distributed as its feathered friends, though global warming may be encouraging its spread further north. Since it is easier to see now that the leaves are off the trees, mistletoe-spotters can send off for a Christmas-card type record sheet from Plantlife.

Mr Briggs is optimistic: "If people pay a bit more attention to it, it's not going to become endangered." He would like to see nurseries selling young apple trees with mistletoe growing on them as it is not the easiest plant to grow from seed, although once established it will go on indefinitely.

The results of the survey will be collated in the spring with the possible spin-off of a booklet for public sale. So perhaps, by next Christmas, we will be able to kiss and tell.

JENNY McCLEAN

● *Plantlife, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD (0171-938 9111). Enclose an SAE if you would like a record card. Tenbury Wells has a mistletoe market on December 12.*

CHARLIE VARLEY

Plentiful crop: the little-known habits of mistletoe are being monitored by the conservation charity Plantlife

THE TIMES

PASSPORT OFFERS

FROM MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

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Tue–Sun 10am–5.30pm; Mon 12pm–5.30pm (last admission 4.30pm daily)

Exhibition runs until February 18

(closed December 24–26 inclusive)

CHEPSTOW
Toy with the Idea at the Chepstow Museum

A Christmas exhibition that moves. Toys, models, automata and book illustrations by Rodney Peppé (author of "The Mice who lived in a Shoe" and "Huxley Pig", which became a TV series). Many of the original illustrations, plus over 30 imaginative constructions used in the tales, such as the egg box transformed into a space ship and the bowler hat that flies, drives and sails on water.

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Mon–Sat 11am–1pm, 2pm–5pm; Sun 2pm–5pm
Exhibition runs until January 21
(closed 24–26 December, January 1)

MANCHESTER
Wood Engraving – Here and Now at the Whitworth Art Gallery

Attend the opening today of this exhibition celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Society of Wood Engravers, and see demonstrations of the techniques used in this expressive medium. Works by 15 artists, ranging from the traditional to the avant-garde show how one of the oldest forms of printing maintains its dynamism today, using innovative techniques.

Admission free

Passport holders invited to attend the opening of the exhibition today.

The University of Manchester, Oxford Road
Tel: 0161 275 7450

December 9 only 11am–4pm: Refreshments served 12pm–2pm: Demonstrations 11am–4pm

Exhibition then runs until February 11

Admission free

Mon–Sat 10am–5pm; Sun 2pm–5pm
(closed December 22–January 1 inclusive)

YOUR LOCAL MUSEUM OR GALLERY
A Christmas Shopping Message

Are you searching for that elusive something to bring extra Christmas cheer to your family or friends? Don't forget, shops at museums and galleries have a wealth of gifts from the past, the present and even the future.

Passport holders are entitled to discounts at a number of museum and gallery shops including:

Edinburgh: Museum of Childhood; National Gallery of Scotland; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art; Scottish National Portrait Gallery; The Writers' Museum
Kingswinford: Broadfield Glass Museum
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Chiffchaff who lingered longer . . .

Feather report

Trilling sight: a chiffchaff

THE AIR was chill, the sky was grey, and snow lingered among the dead leaves on the ground. But there was a winter flurry of birds in the trees around me. A robin was bobbing up and down excitedly on a twig, making angry ticking sounds — and I could hear the rival robin that it was getting excited about making similar calls further over in the undergrowth.

Just by me, there were eight or nine blackbirds in a dense hawthorn tree that was still loaded with darkening red berries. The twigs and berries were so thick that you could not see the blackbirds in the middle of them, but some of them kept flying out in alarm, then surreptitiously making their way back. Others emerged to eat a berry on an outer twig. They held it for a moment in the middle of their open beak, silhouetted against the sky, before swallowing it, then plunged back into the tree for more.

A moment later, the branches around were full of small, dancing shapes. A restless flock of titmice had arrived. Long-tailed tits fell with a twist of their body from a high to a lower branch, as if they were tiny, spent rockets. They hung on a twig for a moment, furiously pecking at a bud with an insect in it, then dropped off and looped away to another tree.

Great tits were shooting like puffs of blue smoke from tree to tree, always pausing to look to left and right when they landed, and giving one a chance to see their yellow breasts divided by a bold black streak. Blue tits seemed to linger longer on a spray when they found something to interest their stomachs. All the tits were calling — the long-tailed tits muttering to themselves, the blue tits making brief trills, the great tits making sharper, more ringing notes.

Then, suddenly, somewhere among them, I heard a chiffchaff. Chiffchaffs have a liquid "hweet" call, a common sound in our woods in the summer, and that was what I was hearing. But try as I might, I could not pick it out among all these small silhouettes of birds, flickering among the last damp leaves that dotted the branches.

Most chiffchaffs have gone to the Mediterranean by now, but in recent years a few have always wintered in the south of England. No one is sure whether these are birds that nested here, or birds from further north that came in on the autumn migration and decided to stay.

I would have liked to see it and confirm that I had correctly identified its call. But by now the whole flock was tripping away to another part of the woods. These mixed winter flocks go round and round a stretch of woodland, picking up all the obvious insects, and not wasting time hunting for the hidden ones.

So I too went on my way, and saw a few ducks and coots that I had seen the day before, and got a glimpse of a heron, its head sunk in its shoulders, by a distant ditch. It was getting towards dusk, and I disturbed a pheasant that had gone to roost in a tree, as I made my way home.

Then, suddenly, I heard the "hweet" call again. This time it was coming from a hedge at the edge of the wood. A bird was slipping through the twigs, and it paused long enough for me to get my glasses on it.

I could not see its greeny-buff colour in the half-light — but in combination with its note, its slim, graceful form was unmistakable. I had seen my wintering chiffchaff after all.

DERWENT MAY

● **What's about:** *Birders — Listen for mistle thrushes and song thrushes singing vociferously from tree tops. Twitchers — arctic redpoll at Spurn in Humberside and Redcar in Cleveland; waxwing at Holme, Norfolk; greater yellowlegs at Blennerville, Co Kerry, Ireland. Details from Birdline. 0891 700222. Calls cost 40p a minute cheap rate. 50p a minute at all other times.*

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هكذا من الاصل

Background to the black arts

Dark foliage will highlight the richness of dahlias

A-Z BOTANICAL COLLECTION

'David Howard', an orange-bronze miniature decorative dahlia, has strong purplish-black foliage on stocky plants growing to about 3ft

I am going all the way with dahlias this year. Every year I fill a couple of parallel, stone-edged beds with annuals or half hardies. There is nothing else in either of them except three would-be drums of yew, which in a few more years of clipping will be tight, black top hats sitting on the soil.

This year I am bedding with dahlias and almost nothing else. I love the way the low light of autumn afternoons makes long shadows and turns dark foliage to black. And it turns the purple/black-leaved dahlias to ink.

Bedding always looks better when unified by an undertow of colour or foliage, so why not make one general black background? As far as I know no one has bred a black-leaved dahlia with white flowers, presumably because most black-leaved plants are heavily pigmented and far removed from the albino.

Look at the black-leaved elderberry, *Sambucus nigra* 'Guincho Purple'. Its black/purple leaves carry the usual elder flowers but suffused with pink, which is very glamorous but perhaps not as ostentatiously chic as white would be. To achieve a black and white garden you have to run a large-flowered white clematis through it, such as 'Marie Boisselot', or in a wild garden the small-flowered *Clematis potaninii*. Black and white may be clever, but it does not make the blood run faster. But late season reds and yellows on black are devilishly striking.

At the centre of my beds are groups of 'David Howard', an orange-bronze miniature decorative dahlia, which means the flowers are still a good size, perhaps 3-4in across, but miniature in comparison with giant decoratives with flowers more than 10in across.

My aim is not to blot out the sun, but to reflect it. 'David Howard' is a fine plant; strong purplish black foliage on stocky plants growing to about 3ft. Last year I grew it with rich blue *Agapanthus* which looked very Minoan in late summer. As an edging I am using dwarf bedding dahlias. 'Preston Park' is a single scarlet with a gold centre, over black foliage, and it grows to about 16in. With it is 'Yellow Hammer', another black-leaved single but with acid-yellow flowers. The contrast with black is startling, like a spill of Häagen-Dazs ice-cream on a gleaming black clavicle.

Unfortunately, my supplier could not run to all of the 'Yellow Hammer' I needed so I had to settle for a few 'Ellen Houston' as a substitute. I wish I had not. 'Ellen Houston' is just as black and just as neat, but the flower is a double orangey-red and an unnecessary compromise. On short dahlias I also prefer single flowers. I like to see the eye in the middle, the face of the flower, rather than an endless eruption of feathery petals.

I also like the charm of single nasturtiums more than the full-throated, double orange 'Hermine Grasshof'. With double day-lilies you get the best of both worlds; *Hemerocallis* 'Green Kwanso' has an open throat inside a stack of trumpets. Nasturtium flowers are edible and can be used to decorate salads, so maybe double 'Hermine Grasshof' is crunchier on the palate. Certainly, it is true of the double day-lily buds, which can also be eaten. (Too many induce hallucinations, I understand. I can never bear to eat enough to find out.)

The queen (or perhaps pontiff) of the red-on-black dahlias is 'Bishop of Llandaff', a fabulously deep red single, growing to about 30in. But it is rather celibate; when you dig it up at the end of a season, there is hardly enough tuber to store dry successfully. It is often easier to buy cuttings from a nursery. A friend of mine has turned to 'Tally-Ho', which is not quite such an intense red but makes plenty of tubers for easy storage. It is sold by Cotswold Garden Flowers, of Evesham, Hereford and Worcester, which also recommends the dark-leaved varieties 'Grenadier' and 'Bednall Beauty', both ruby red.

If I did not have clipped yews to break up the dahlias, I would perhaps introduce dark-leaved cannas, to bring a broader, smoother leaf and some spikiness to the picture.

As it is, all I have chosen to add is a few calendulas until the dahlias get going. Then I shall whip them out, so that their later tendency to mildew does not spoil the end-of-season bonfire of black, red and yellow dahlias alone.

STEPHEN ANDERTON

- *Suppliers: Cotswold Garden Flowers, 1 Waterside, Evesham (01386 833849). Halls of Heddon, West Heddon Nursery, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Northumberland (01661 852445). Halls's dahlia and chrysanthemum fields are open free of charge in September.*

WEEKEND TIPS

- *Check over pelargoniums and fuchsias brought indoors, remove dead leaves, and give minimum water.*
- *In dry, windy weather, mow lawns lightly, if necessary, preferably with a light-weight rotary mower.*
- *Bring strawberries in pots under glass for early cropping.*
- *Pick flowering sprigs of winter jasmine, wintersweet, witch hazel,* Viburnum farreri *and* Viburnum tinus.

GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q **I have a conifer, *Thujopsis dolabrata* I think, about ten yards from the house. It is about 15 years old and as many feet tall. I am afraid it will get too big. Could I take out the leader and shape it, to keep it in hand?** — Mrs J. Allen, Hereford.

A What a useful conifer this is. It is relatively slow growing, and makes a large shrub or small tree with a rich mid-green foliage. At ten yards from your house I would be inclined to let it grow.

You could top it out and shape it if you wish — nibble it all over with secateurs. You may find that taking out the leader will slow its growth. On the other hand it will be spoilt as a specimen. The choice is yours.

Q **I have a Doyenne du Comice pear trained as an espalier on a south-west facing wall. For many years it fruited well, but not now. It makes wood buds rather than flower buds. When I summer prune, I cut off 18in of growth, but it then makes another 18in, which I cut out to the second bud of the earlier growth. Is feeding, or lack of it, the problem?** — P. L. Butler, Norwich.

A Your tree does not sound underfed, as it is growing hard. But a feed of potash would encourage fruit buds. (Three-quarters of an ounce of sulphate of potash per square yard in January.) When you winter prune, cut back the secondary growth only to its own second bud. Try delaying the summer pruning to discourage secondary wood growth.

Q **I have just lost a 40-year-old cherry to honey fungus. I made a huge bonfire of the branches over the stump, hoping it would destroy the disease. However, I have a beautiful walnut of the same age only seven yards away. Are there any steps I can take to minimise the risk of infection?** — Lord Kilbracken, Westminster.

A Honey fungus (*Armillaria mellea*) is a very variable problem. Some forms attack healthy trees and kill them outright: others attack sickly trees and kill slowly. Other forms do little real damage.

The fungus spreads through the ground via its black boot-lace rhizomorphs, which live on the roots of their prey. Your cherry stump would be better dug right out, taking with it as much of the side-spreading main roots as you can trace.

Only then drench the area with Armillotox, according to the maker's instructions. Shrubs which are dying in part from honey fungus are better removed altogether. (Maria Fremlin, of Colchester, has redcurrants dying out in patches.)

- *Readers wishing to have gardening problems answered should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend,* The Times, *1 Pennington St, London E1 9XN. We regret that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.* The Times *regrets that enclosures cannot be returned.*

The grass will soon be greener at New York's most popular gathering place

Bare underfoot in Central Park

The Great Lawn in Central Park is a brown wasteland

BRITISH gardeners, after that lawn-parcher of a summer, may reckon they now know the worst in horticultural brutality. Think again. The man with surely the toughest assignment in the lawn-tending world is Neil Calvanese, head gardener for Central Park, New York.

Mr Calvanese not only has to cope with a climate of terrible extremes but also sees his lawns regularly trampled underfoot by uncaring multitudes. There are pop concerts, Papal visits and ball games. Things have become so bad that he has now persuaded his superiors to close the park's Great Lawn for two years while it is restored to the bucolic vista of long-forgotten days.

The Great Lawn's 15 acres have, in the words of Henry J. Stern, New York Parks Commissioner, "become a dustbowl". The soil laid is hard-packed, and bereft of goodness. The top level long ago blew away and much of it is now said to reside at the bottom of Turtle Pond, to the south. On windy days you can sometimes catch sight of that Wild Western cliché, a tumbleweed, being blown wildly across the now-not-so-Great Lawn.

Restoration costs are being put at $18 million (£12 million) and will involve the introduction of elaborate irrigation devices, the planting of 2,000 fringe shrubs, 228,000 plants, the installation of 450 new benches and improved lighting (for the nocturnal safety of joggers). The lawn will be regraded with deep-rooted, tall fescue grass, some of it Kentucky bluegrass. Poor Turtle Pond will be dredged, enlarged and planted with rushes.

Mr Calvanese, who joined the parks department in 1981, watched in pain as the old lawn deteriorated. The Papal visit in early October, when His Holiness said mass for 120,000 people, was the final blow.

But now Mr Calvanese is like a man with a fresh mission in life. The new topsoil will have a high sand content and will sit on gravel and drainage pipes above the old compacted soil, clay cap and rubble fill. For fertilisation he envisages three or four applications a year of 1lb of nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft. "For a fast green-up I will use a quick release of nitrogen, but in the very hot season a slower release will be used so that it does not burn the lawn."

Grass in New York has to cope with hot summers — this year there was barely a drop of rain in July and August, with temperatures in the mid-nineties.

The plan is the first work on the Great Lawn for more than 60 years, and represents a win for the horticulturists against the baseball players. The lawn was laid in 1936 on the site of an old reservoir, hence the poor drainage, for in the words of one observer "the Great Lawn is in essence a giant bath tub". The athletic lobby won permission in 1957 to use the lawn for games. Those ball games have now turned the ground into a wasteland that is more than 40 per cent bare.

Public access will now be denied for two years while Mr Calvanese, 46, and his diggers get to work. New Yorkers who use Central Park regularly are most put out, but Mr Calvanese sees off complaints like an assiduous Jack Russell guarding its ball. "Grass is a living thing and you must be careful," he says. "You guys in Britain have it easy with your lawns." When the work is done he expects to have to cut the grass twice a week in spring and perhaps as much as that in the autumn, but the effort will be well worth the new found greenness, he argues.

Cynics have asked if the new lawn will be any better at coping with heavy public use, but the gardeners want a re-evaluation of the Great Lawn's role as Manhattan's big outdoor gathering point. They want the Great Lawn once again to be just that — great.

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After the push and shove of crowded stores — pamper yourself. **Rachel Campbell-Johnston** smooths your path

When you just can't face it

Beauty is supposedly in the eye of the beholder. But at this time of year, beautiful is not usually the adjective which springs to mind when one beholds oneself in the cruel, neon-lit mirrors of a department store. At the end of a long day's trawl through the packed arcades searching out seasonal gifts or sale bargains, your face can look like the remains of the Christmas cake left out in the rain.

This is when you begin to suspect that your only admirers will have glasses as thick as the bottom of the bottle they have just drained, and that you should start thinking about taking an hour off to repair the ravages of the day.

The Sanctuary is a health and beauty club for women in London's Covent Garden. In this elegant haven they can retreat from the feeding frenzy of the streets to drift as indolently as tropical fish, relax with *Vogue* on the wicker poolside chairs, or doze on benches in the balmy heat.

Facilities include saunas, a gym, swimming pool, sunbeds, restaurant and bar. The cost of annual membership starts at £850, depending on how often and at what times you visit, but there is a daily membership available for £45. On Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays an evening-only membership is offered, from 5pm to 10pm, costing £27 and giving access to all facilities.

You do not have to be a member at all to book yourself a facial, although the club's other facilities are not available to you. Members are charged slightly less than non-members for facials and other supplementary beauty treatments.

All the facials take about an hour. Swathed in soft white towels you can lie back on the couch and not think about Sainsbury's and the sugared almonds you forgot to buy — and submit to a relaxing massage of neck, shoulders and face.

The most simple and least expensive facial costs £22 and cleans, exfoliates and moisturises the skin. There are professional beauty therapists on hand to guide you through more complex programmes. They will advise whether a fragrant mask of lime blossom, grapefruit and witchhazel, suitable for all skin types, would be better than a micronised marine algae mask, a rebalancing seaweed treatment recommended for problematically greasy skins.

The most sophisticated (and expensive) treatment is the pure collagen velvet facial in which blends of marine extracts and oils are massaged into the delicate areas of your facial skin. Costing £72, probably not an awful lot less than a facelift, you would certainly hope to reap the promised rewards — the softening of fine lines and wrinkles to a velveteen smoothness.

The Sanctuary offers a wide range of other treatments, most available to non members. A deluxe manicure costs £24, and a relaxing foot massage is £30. A complete "indulgence package" involving a facial and partial body massage, manicure and pedicure, costs about £96.

Harvey Nichols, in Knightsbridge, west London, offers similar therapeutic luxury. The weary shopper can take up complimentary membership of an in-store club, open when the store is: 10am-7pm weekdays (10am-8pm Weds); 10am-6pm, Saturday: and 12pm-5pm, Sunday). There, collapsing onto the sofas of a private sitting room, you can decide over a cup of coffee which beauty treatment you would like. Studios in the store's basement provide fuller treatments, including head, neck and shoulder massage.

Many of the major beauty houses offer facials for this club. Espa, for example, gives a 20-minute complimentary treatment, and Aveda a 30-minute stress-relieving facial for £10. Both of these, however, are done at the counter on the shop floor.

There is not quite the same feeling of luxuriant abandon as lying swaddled in white sheets, but the reclining chairs are comfortable and curtains discreetly shield you from the curiosity of other shoppers.

Different beauty houses provide their treatments at different times of year in the basement studios.

Sisley is now offering a 45-minute facial using aromatherapy techniques for £20, and the price is redeemable against skincare products. Clarins also has a studio at Harvey Nichols, as well as in department stores throughout the country. Its range of products is comprehensive, and the beauticians, dressed in their trademark, doctor-style white coats, have a comforting bedside manner to match.

A skincare consultation at Clarins takes about 15 minutes, and the individually tailored facial treatment usually lasts about an hour. Their products are applied with gentle massage, to smooth, soften, detoxify and tone. Prices range from about £20 to £25, but may vary depending on which department store you visit. In the run up to Christmas Clarins is offering a package including a facial and manicure, taking about an hour and a half, for £25.

A facial carries on working for eight to twelve hours after its application. Slapping on full warpaint immediately is not recommended. However, all treatments finish with a light, "touch of colour" makeover included in the price, so you needn't re-emerge onto the streets looking like a boiled egg.

> Swathed in soft, white towels, you can lie back and forget all about Sainsbury's

If you wish, you can have a full makeover (application and advice on suitable make-up). Aveda products are used for this at the Sanctuary, and a consultation costs £25. There are no hairdressers, but shampoos, hairdryers and tongs are available.

Harvey Nichols has an instore hair and beauty salon where you can have your hair blow-dried and shaped for about £15.50 if you have short hair, and £18.50 for long hair. If you want to consult the style director, the prices rise.

Harvey Nichols also offers a full evening makeover for £20. The Clarins full makeover costs £12 and takes about half an hour. Whether you can get your hair done afterwards depends on what facilities the store you use has on offer.

Just an hour or two off at the end of a day's shopping can leave you restored to radiance for the evening ahead.

Beauty may be only skin deep, but for those who never saw the point of having an adorable pancreas anyway, a facial is certainly the best answer.

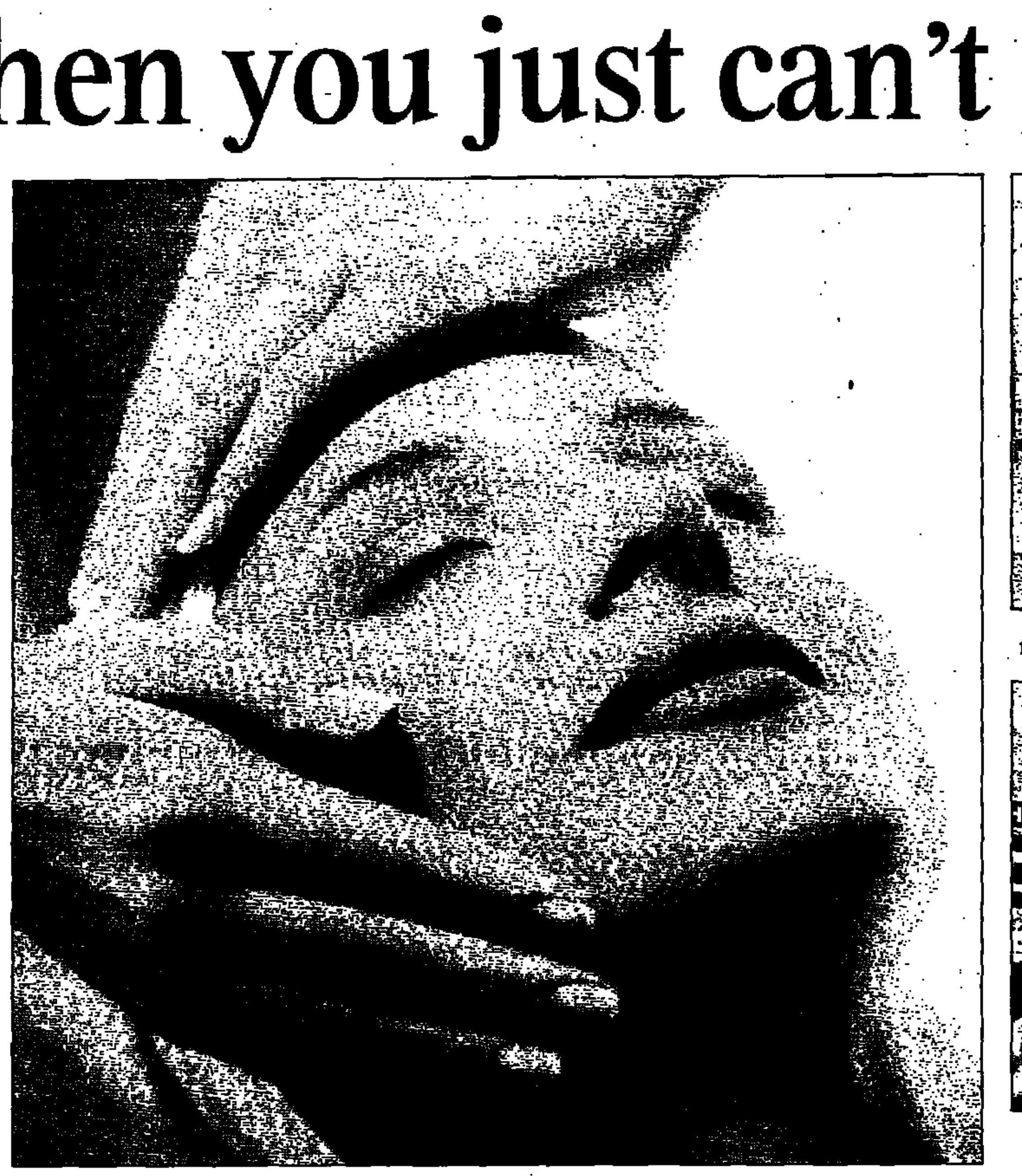
Beauty points

☐ To avoid disappointment, it is advisable to book a facial in advance, especially in the busy weeks before Christmas. To make appointments and get a full list of prices call the numbers below:

☐ The Sanctuary: 12 Floral Street, London WC2. (0171-240 9635)

☐ Harvey Nichols: Knightsbridge, London SW1. (0171-235 5000)

☐ Clarins: Telephone 0171-629 2979 for details of a Clarins studio in your area and availability in different stores.



A facial at Clarins takes about an hour after a 15-minute skincare consultation

After a hectic day of shopping, let the stress float away at The Sanctuary, £27 per evening

ANDY GLASS © VOGUE

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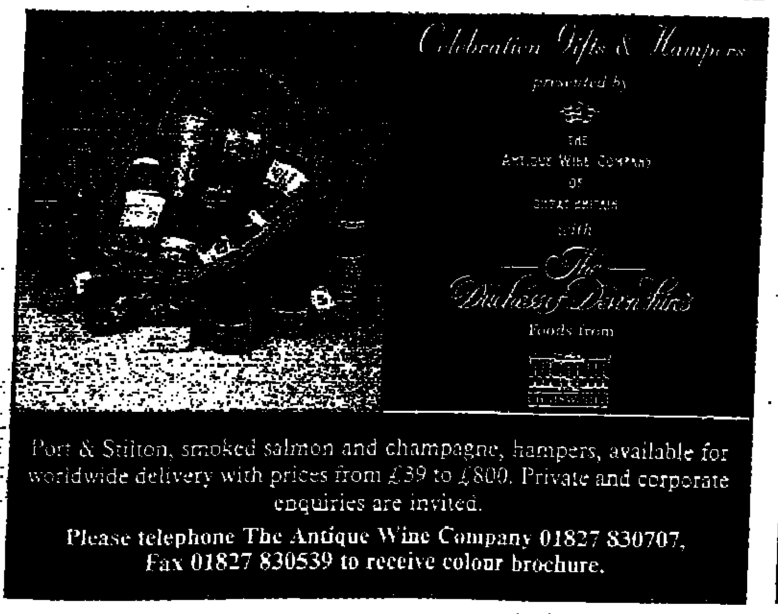
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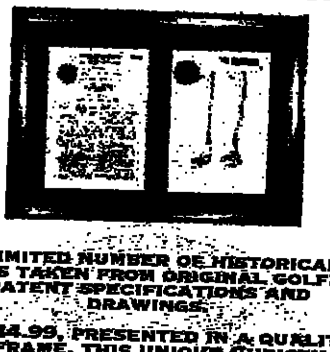

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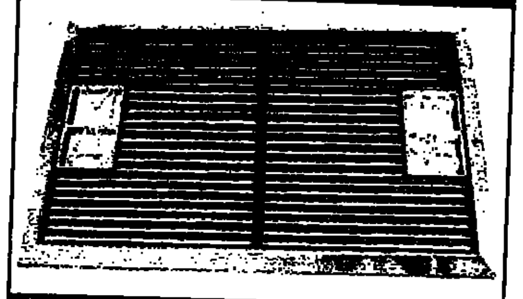

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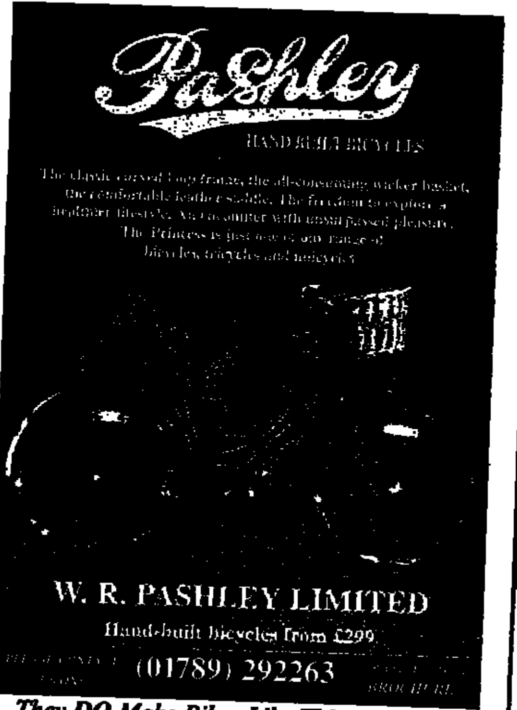

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A seasonal sampling of the 1995 vintage drink guides; plus the stars of teenage fiction

Raise a glass to the year's headiest titles

Andrew Barr aspires to be the drinking man's thinker. **Drink** (Bantam Press, £16.99), is as all-embracing as its title. Barr takes in the whole liquid world and uses it as a floating base for anecdotes leading to opinions, generally admirably argued. There is tea, which came into fashion so that society ladies could show off their china. And there is pernicious coffee. Frederick the Great would have none of it, and reckoned that a coffee-drinking army could be relied upon neither to endure hardship nor defeat enemies.

Coming up to date, Barr ridicules the coffee-bar boom of the 1950s and wonders how anybody could have made money out of teenagers lingering for hours over a cappuccino, ninepenn'orth of frothy milk with a dusting of chocolate. The Italians have always got it right by making coffee swillers stand up at the counter: it moves them out quickly.

There are soft drinks. Keep clear of these, especially on licensed premises. The Consumers Association reckoned that the average pub price of a pint of orange juice was £2.37 — and that was in 1989. Barr is properly cynical about the vogue for mineral water in Britain, where the consumption has risen ten times in as many years. What is the logic of paying more for a bottle of water, than for a pint of milk?

Once on alcohol, Andrew Barr really gets going. He has the imbiber's love of anecdote and heroes. His "informal social history", for example, remembers John Mytton, Regency buck and six-bottles-of-port-a-day man who set fire to his nightshirt to frighten away the hiccups. But the deeper purpose is to chart the trends of drinking down the centuries.

Too much time, Barr reckons, has been spent under the subjugation of political and ideological nannies. The recent, long-overdue reform in licensing laws is welcomed, but otherwise the outlook is bleak. Take no solace in the rise of wine-drinking in the late 1980s. This is simply the result of the supermarkets turning the stuff into another household product.

Support for the Barr view comes in the plethora of cheap-and-cheerful wine and spirit guides this Christmas. Tom Stevenson's **SuperBooze 1996, The Definitive Guide to Supermarket Drink** (Faber, £4.99) and Judy Ridgway's **Best Wine Buys in the High Street** (Foulsham, £4.99) are among them.

This is the new 50p-off culture, aided and abetted by the marketing men out to invent alcoholic drinks tasting like a stick of candy at first gulp. Lovers of Malibu will not find much solace in Stevenson. There is only a 20p difference per bottle in the 12 supermarkets surveyed. More serious Pernod tipplers will learn that Safeway undercuts Sainsbury by £1.50.

Barr might have spared a thought for the work done by Jancis Robinson, our new headmistress of wine. There is not a great deal in **Jancis Robinson's Wine Course** (BBC Books, £19.99) which is not already in her *Oxford Companion to Wine*, only a tenner more and far and away the best book on drink published last year. But *Wine Course* looks pretty, and the opening chapters offer sound advice to the beginner. The art of bringing a present for your host has a section on "wines to blush about", and warns against all drink in funny, asymmetrical bottles.

Jancis Robinson, the "headmistress of wine", warns against all drink in odd-shaped bottles

And so to the bar. That, according to *Drink*, used to be the publican's office, and so the one place in the pub to which the public was not admitted. The tradition still exists, he says, in the Crooked Billet at Stoke Row, near Henley.

No entry for this in **The Good Beer Guide 1996** (CAMRA Books, £9.99), although Stoke Row is there. Otherwise the advice is generally good and the symbols useful. Look for the Q sign, denoting pubs free of piped music and electronic games. There are a modest number of establishments with no-smoking areas and, thankfully, no recommendations for the latest excrescence of the licensed trade, the mock-Irish theme pub called Beastie O'Shaggs, or something similar.

JOHN HIGGINS

Readers' verdict

David Hooper on the titles walking out of his bookstore

INDUSTRY hype, the critics and word of mouth have all had their say on the titles released this year, and the public is finally delivering its verdict on the most desirable books of 1995.

Fiction is dominated by three works of quality. This year's Booker Prize winner, *The Ghost Road* by Pat Barker, leads the field over Salman Rushdie's universally applauded *The Moor's Last Sigh* and Umberto Eco's *The Island Of The Day Before*.

Among other popular hardback novels, *Sophie's World* by Jostein Gaarder is remarkable, despite its subject matter — a potted history of Western philosophy for the teenager.

The flood of attention that Nicholas Evans has received over his advance for *The Horse Whisperer* is generating sufficient sales to recoup some of the publisher's investment. *Follow Your Heart* by Susan Tamaro has achieved prominence through the zealotry with which Kensington ladies buy it for each other, whereas Nick Hornby's funny *High Fidelity* appeals to a younger readership.

Two works of suspense fiction justly outsell the rest, *Enigma* by Robert Harris and *Betrayal* by Clare Francis. Meanwhile, adventure fiction seems to have lost its ground to the autobiographies of two Gulf War veterans. In *Immediate Action*, Andy McNab spills the beans on his life in the SAS, and in *A Soldier's Way* Colin Powell presents a behind-the-scenes view of Washington life. Three other particularly fine hardbacks biographies have reached a wide audience. *Palimpsest: A Memoir*, from Gore Vidal; *Albert Speer: His Battle With Truth* by Gitta Sereny, and *The Railway Man* by Eric Lomax.

Nelson Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk To Freedom*, is eclipsed by the adventures of two newly wed aristocrats and their manservant. Perhaps only in Kensington could *To War With Whitaker*, the Second World War diaries of the Countess of Ranfurly, challenge Alan Bennett's *Writing Home* for the position of top paperback biography.

Twin billing as both a work of fiction and a self-help book have no doubt aided sales of Paula Coelho's *The Alchemist*, a resonant, fabulous story designed to goad the reader into active pursuit of their dreams. Neither fiction nor exactly fact is Adrian G. Gilbert and Maurice M. Cotterell's *The Mayan Prophecies*. One of its 5,000-year-old predictions is that the world will end in 2012, which leaves several years to eat, drink and be merry. Two restaurants share their recipe for these activities in *Quaglino's: The Cookbook* by Richard Whittington and Martin Webb and *The River Café Cookbook* by Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers. Despite the fact that *Delia Smith's Winter Collection* outsells its nearest rival four to one, some other television tie-ins are selling briskly too, notably *Rick Stein's Taste Of The Sea* and *Jancis Robinson's Wine Course*.

Seducing buyers with packaging are *1,000 Nudes* (Taschen), which resembles a gold brick, and the new, 16th edition of *The Story of Art* by E.H. Gombrich resembling a stone slab.

Two popular history hardbacks this year are *The Romanovs: The Final Chapter* by Robert K. Massie, and *Constantinople: City of World's Desire 1453-1924* by Philip Mansel, which reflects on the city's uniquely strategic and symbolic importance. In paperback, Eric Hobsbawm offers his overview of this century in *Age of Extremes*, and Theodore Zeldin gives us *An Intimate History of Humanity*. Nobody could be as excited about the world's technological future as Bill Gates, who shares his vision in *The Road Ahead*.

FAVOURITE books for children this year are Lucy Cousins's funny and charming pop-up *Maisy's House*, and the irreverent *The Queen's Knickers* by Nicholas Allan. *Hutchinson's Treasure of Chldren's Literature*, edited by Alison Sage, is proving popular.

Finally, sales would indicate that the books you may expect to see in a friend's loo are *The Faber Book of Science* edited by John Carey, *Notes From a Small Island* by Bill Bryson and *The Making of Pride and Prejudice* by Sue Birtwhistle.

● *The author is manager of Waterstone's, 193 Kensington High Street, London W8.*

Forget the cosy endings, this is kid's stuff

THE chill of stone-cold realism lingers in teenage fiction but authenticity mixed with the warmth of humour makes **Tango's Baby** by Martin Waddell (Walker, £8.99) the best told novel of the year. The theme is not new; the quality is in the handling.

An unlikely love affair between popular but irritating Crystal O'Leary, in her last year at school, and Brian Tangello, described as one of life's losers, and known as Tango, results in a pregnancy. Crystal "sits back and waits for it all to happen" according to one school friend: "babies, houses, jobs ... Her Tango was going to smooth it all out, no bother". Meanwhile, "everything seemed to wash over Tango without disturbing his brain. But that is not the way it was."

Somewhere behind the owl-like glasses, the proud father is building doomed hopes for the future. *Tango's Baby* has the virtue of spreading reactions between friends who relate events with energising honesty. "It's a feature of Tango's story," says one, "that people could see his problems coming and kept trying to help him, but it never seemed to work out the way they intended."

In **The Baby and the Fly Pie** (Puffin, £3.99), a baby is once again pivotal to the plot. Written by Melving Burgess, a new and powerful talent, who offers few easy solutions, the story is about the discovery of a kidnapped baby by three orphans who survive by sorting through rubbish tips. Hoping to claim the reward and start a new life if they can return the baby safely to its parents, the rescuers experience surreal adventures worthy of J.G. Ballard. Inspired by the shanty children of South America, This forceful story is told with flair, warmth and humour.

For readers in the 12-14 age group, Burgess's first novel, **The Cry of the Wolf** (Puffin £3.99), about a wolf under threat from a fanatical hunter, is high on emotional tension. In it, author becomes wolf.

Wolfecho by Roger S. Green (Oxford, £5.99) is less about wolves than wolfish tricks, which occur in this stimulating time-slip of history. The 13-year-old Scot escapes the frustrations of city life and his frightful father by stumbling into the fresher but more threatening air of the Norman Conquest. Historical fiction may not ring excitingly in the ears of today's children, but Wolfecho, with its tension between a stifled present and the bloodbath of the past, must surely be this year's most readable exception.

In contrast to the prevailing climate of drama and suspense, **Beyond the Orchid House**, by Ruth Elwin Harris (Walker, £3.99), is a dreamily charming family saga set in the sheltering boundaries of prewar Somerset. Unmarried and politically unaware Gwen, third of the four Purcell sisters, is given a collection of rare orchids which, significantly, take more cosseting than most humans. Vivid descriptions of the Quantocks, Gwen's dead fiancé and a devious nephew ensue until, in 1936, her eyes are opened to menace on a visit to Germany.

Gerda and Kay in *The Snow Queen*

Jan Mark can transform an ordinary set of circumstances into a witty and original story. In **A Fine Summer Knight** (Viking, £10.99), Grace lives in a world that is shrinking daily. The last of six — "She had come too late" — she is never allowed out of the estate on her own. Everything changes for the better when Grace, thinking she has spotted a ghostly knight through a telescope, joins a Sealed Knot group where danger is only a game. Would that there were always such happy solutions.

Spooky stories of the supernatural are currently popular, and **The Fear Man** by Ann Halam (Orion £9.99), with echoes of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, is the best example to come my way this year. In this, it is Andrei's mother with her nocturnal habits and unsettled lifestyle who at first appears "severely unusual". Later, it becomes clear that others in the family have unsuspected links with the supernatural. So, when the door of their house reveals "a grey thing, like a thin grey caterpillar, wriggling along the crack above the lock", 14-year-old Andrei knows what to do.

Hans Christian Andersen's **The Snow Queen**, brilliantly illustrated by P.J. Lynch (Red Fox, £4.99) is one which reaches into our times. Remember the story? Kay and Gerda play happily together until a shard of mirror enters Kay's eye, turning his heart to ice. Only the terrible Snow Queen, made entirely of glittering snow and ice, has meaning for him. It is not until Gerda finds him in the palace of ice that her hot, bitter tears melt his heart. Was Andersen writing the Charles and Di story?

MAUREEN OWEN

The Times / Dillons Bestsellers

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4	X FILES BOOK OF THE UNEXPLAINED Vol 1 *(Simon & Schuster)*	£15.99	6	4
5	THE GHOST ROAD **Pat Barker** *(Viking)*	£15	4	3
6	MASKERADE **Terry Pratchett** *(Gollancz)*	£15.99	3	5
7	COME TO GRIEF **Dick Francis** *(Michael Joseph)*	£15.99	8	12
8	ENIGMA **Robert Harris** *(Hutchinson)*	£15.99	7	10
9	THE MAYAN PROPHECIES **A.G. Gilbert and M.M. Cotterell** *(Element)*	£16.99	0	1
10	FROM POTTER'S FIELD **Patricia Cornwell** *(Little Brown)*	£15.99	10	9

PAPERBACK

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7	THE LAST HUMAN **Doug Naylor** *(Penguin)*	£5.99	4	4
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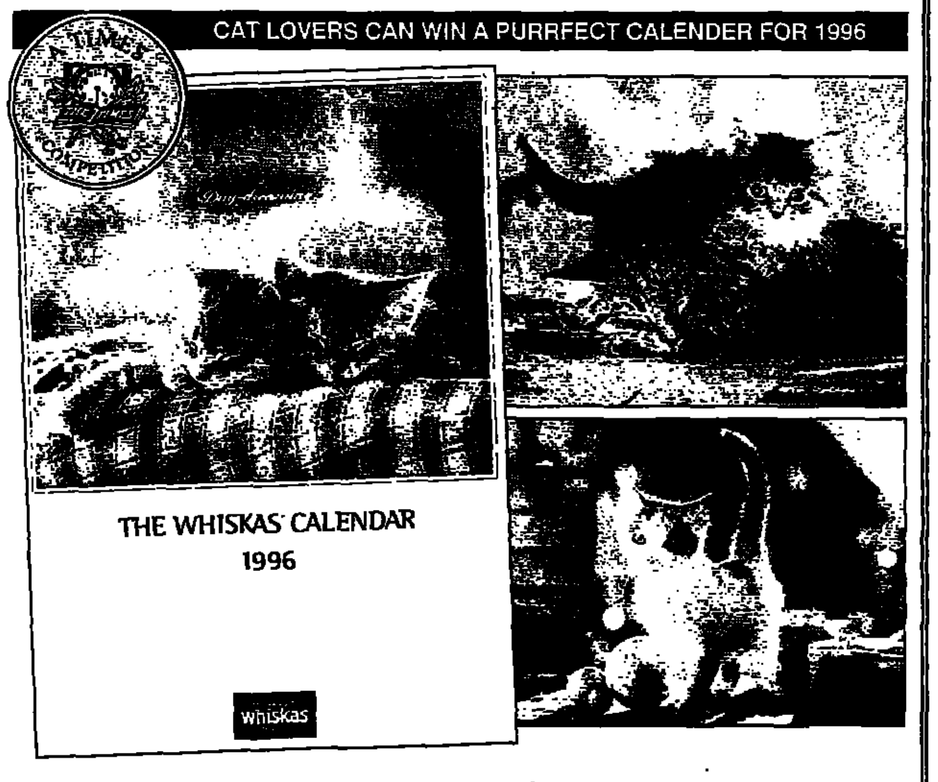

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The Times, in association with Whiskas, has 500 copies of the Whiskas 1996 calendar, worth £5.50 each, for you to win. In full colour and with 12 different feline photographs of cute cats, the calendar has a year planner, and the winners will also receive eight postcards of the photographs.

It is not known exactly when cats first became domesticated and our symbiotic relationship with these once wild creatures began, but now the world is clearly divided into cat lovers and the rest.

Aesop wrote fables about them, insinuating they were not to be trusted, and they are invariably portrayed as a witch's essential accessory. But for people who are besotted by the beasts, and convinced they have a profound understanding of human nature, they are a source of pleasure.

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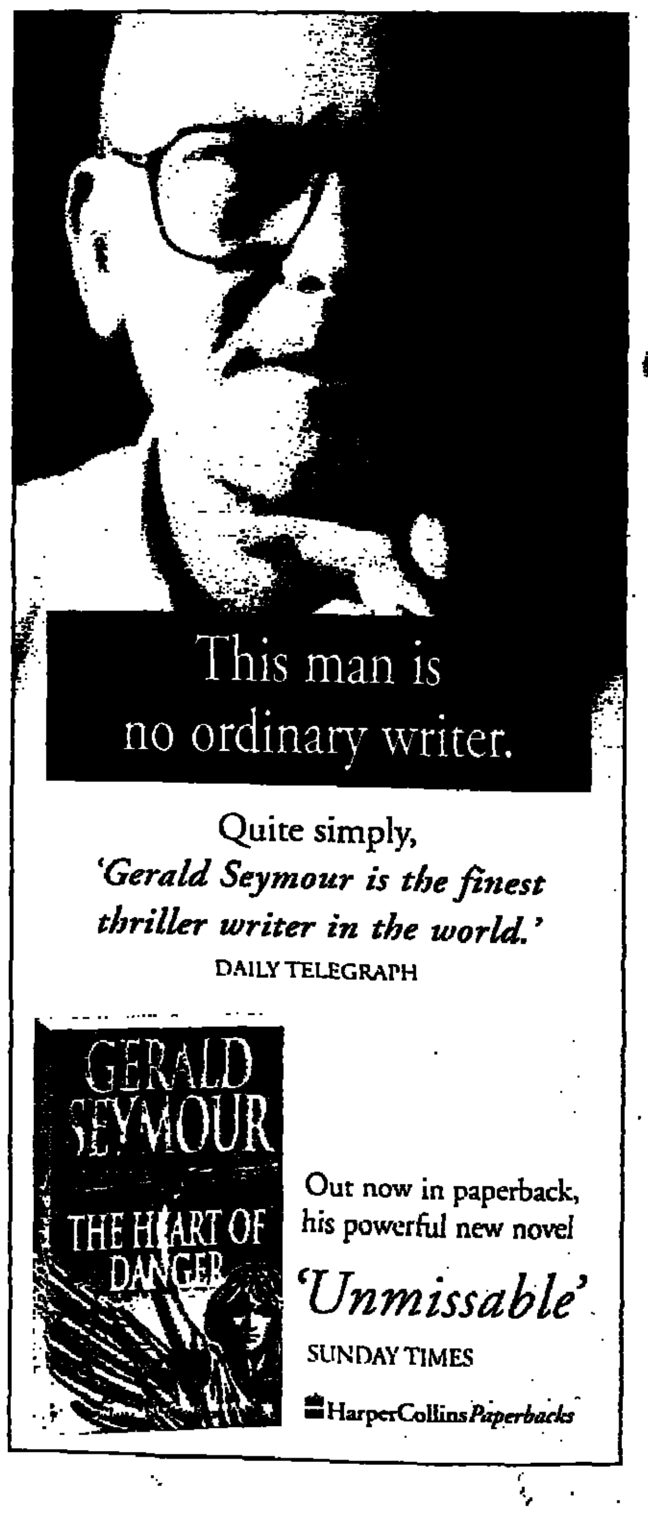
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Sunset over Malory

■ THE PRINCE AND THE PILGRIM
By Mary Stewart
(Hodder & Stoughton, £15.99)

AT LAST. Eleven years have passed since Mary Stewart's last book in the *Merlin* trilogy, and here is a sunset touch, a story originating in Malory and also one of her own books, in which Mordred encounters a wandering priest and a young girl.

Together with a friend's comment, "Everybody has their own grail", these elements have come together in *The Prince and the Pilgrim*. We have two attractive young people making their way towards each other. Alexander is the son of Baudouin, prince of Cornwall, younger brother to King March and nephew to Drustan. The king murders his brother in a jealous rage, and Alexander and his mother escape to live in exile. Alexander is brought up to expect a return to his heritage and to avenge his father's death.

Alice is the beautiful daughter of Duke Ansirus, a devout man given to pilgrimage. Alice was only five when she first went to Jerusalem, but the next pilgrimage is to Tours, in Gaul. The internecine strife between the four brothers who inherited from King Clovis provides a dangerous background to Alice's story.

Alexander sets out to make his fortune, but is kidnapped by Queen Morgan. Nominally she is the king's prisoner, but is enjoying a comfortable captivity, plotting with younger knights against Arthur. She wants the grail. Alice and her father have saved a jewelled cup from the wreckage of Gaul. Is it the grail?

The Holy Grail is an immortal story, and one which has occupied many writers. Alice takes the sensible view: would Our Lord have used an immensely valuable cup at the Last Supper?

It is a gentle love story of a happy marriage, and a happy return for readers of Stewart.

PHILIPPA TOOMEY

R

Phoenix has responded to Penguin's 60p paperbacks by releasing another 50 tiny titles including works by Epicurus and H.G. Wells

Lilliputians swamp the shops

THE next book battle of the Nineties will be the Battle of the Sixties. That is to say, the battle of the little 60p books which are currently flooding the bookshops.

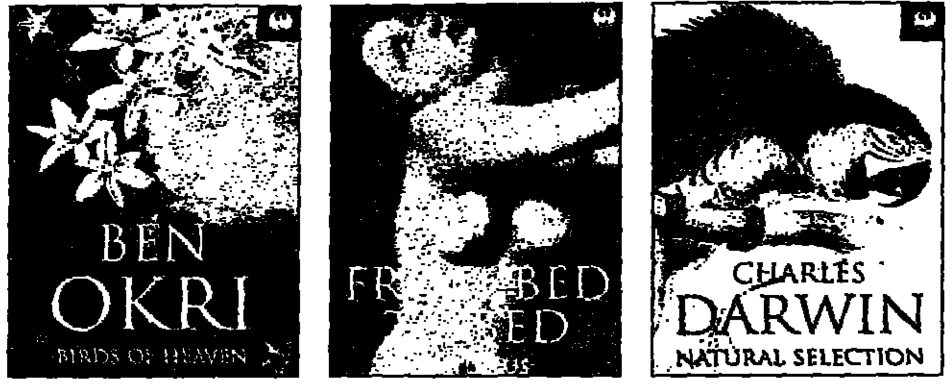
It began last summer when Penguin Books brought out 60 of these mini tomes to celebrate its 60th anniversary. They were a remarkable and unexpected success — unexpected even by Penguin, let alone by the other publishers, who, like Anthony Cheetham, the chief executive of the Orion publishing group, thought they were "a bit of Penguin self-indulgence".

But while he was on holiday in September, Mr Cheetham told me, it became clear that Penguin "had not invented a gimmick but discovered a market". He felt it was worth throwing down a challenge to them — and he wondered how many other publishers were thinking the same thing at that moment. He would have to be the next in the ring — to be the third would be disastrous.

So as soon as he got back to London he mustered his forces. Most of the editorial staff at Orion were sent searching for good subjects for a 50-volume series in the same style as the Penguin Sixties (as they are called). Cheetham's new cohorts would be called Phoenix 60p Paperbacks.

This week, after a lightning operation, 3.2 million copies of the 50 books hit the bookshops. Titles such as Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* did unusually well for Penguin, so there is a "science and philosophy" list of ten which includes *A Guide to Happiness* by Epicurus and *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels.

Also in this section is a mini book about the Greek philosophers, based on the recent bestseller for young people, *Sophie's World*, by Jostein Gaarder. This was edited by Mr Cheetham's 14-year-old daughter, Emma, who deftly snipped away the fictional bits about little Sophie and produced a self-contained book.



Phoenix 60p Paperbacks: competing with the "seven and a bit million" sold by Penguin

Authors knuckled down to speed the series along. Two of the titles in the ten-book history/biography section are *Thatcher's Fall*, taken from the Alan Clark diaries, and *Churchill: Embattled Hero* from the subversive *Eminent Churchillians* by the young historian Andrew Roberts. Both Clark and Roberts offered to make a new book themselves out of the relevant chapters.

There are three other ten-book sections in the Phoenix collection: fiction, poetry, and literature of passion. They include H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and a selection of Catullus's poems called *From Bed to Bed*.

But what are Phoenix 60p Paperbacks up against? Tony Lacey, the publishing director at Penguin, told me just how successful its enterprise has been so far. It has sold "seven and a bit million" copies to the bookshops — all firm sales, with no "sale or return" clause. It printed 125,000 copies of each of the 60 titles, and has already done reprints of some of them. It also offered boxed sets of all 60 titles at £40 (which of course means paying £4 for the box). The first 7,000 boxes were immediately sold out, and it has had a 9,000-box reprint.

Its range of subjects, like the Phoenix range, is mainly drawn from good literature. This is not a downmarket venture, unless short books are themselves downmarket, as some people may feel. The Marcus Aurelius title has already sold 129,000 copies.

But it must be admitted that the topsellers so far are at the lighter end of the list. The current leader is James Herriot's *Seven Yorkshire Tales* at 149,000 copies, hotly pursued by Dick Francis's *Racing Classics* at 148,000. Running equal at 131,000 are *Gunner Milligan, 954024* by Spike Milligan, Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, and Paul Theroux's *Down the Yangtse*. Martin Amis is in sixth place with *God's Dice*.

But Penguin is not stopping there. It is releasing into the shops a further 60 titles. These constitute a new 60p series, "Penguin 60s Classics", based on its existing "Penguin Classics" series. They range from Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and *Meeting Dr Johnson* by James Boswell, to Henry James's *Lesson of the Master* and Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell*.

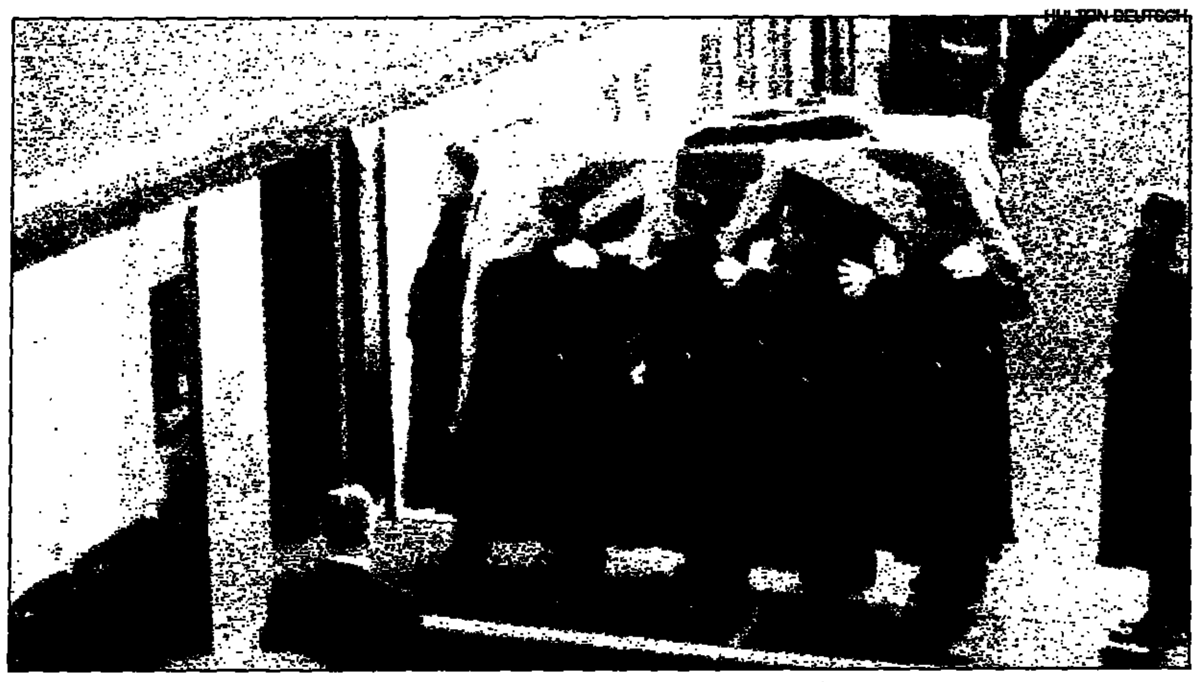
So there will soon be 170 of these easy-to-buy book-bites on display. Our bookshops are turning into Lilliput land. Let us hope that the grand old Gullivers of the shelves are not in the end overwhelmed by the Lilliputians.

DERWENT MAY

Epitaph for a generation

Magnus Linklater

on the insouciance and arrogance of Sixties journalism


HULTON-DEUTSCH

Churchill's funeral, January 30, 1965: "the final act in Britain's greatness" wrote Patrick O'Donovan

NOTHING has changed. Good writing still springs off the page. But is it memorable, as we think it used to be? Do today's young journalists have their hero scribes, swap favourite phrases, worry whether old so-and-so is beginning to lose his touch? I hope so. It would be nice to think that in 30 years' time someone could put together a book called *In the Nineties* as good as this one.

It's hard, of course, to be objective about the Sixties, a decade now drenched in nostalgia. Was it really a golden era of journalism or just the wistful memory of a few deluded old hacks? Ray Connolly is in no doubt. He believes that the "writing that captured a decade" was one of "great idealism and startling creativity".

There are certainly journalistic classics here. They include Humphrey Tyler at Sharpeville, James Cameron on the Kennedy assassination, Patrick O'Donovan at Churchill's funeral, and Nicholas Tomalin in Vietnam. This last piece, "The General Goes Zapping Charlie Cong", which had such an impact when Tomalin first filed it for *The Sunday Times*, is even better than I had remembered. The combination of jocularity and horror captures the essence of that war, the last where such untrammelled reporting was possible.

"*I don't know how you think about war,*" the general tells Tomalin, as he guns down fleeing Vietcong with his personal M-16 carbine. "The way I see it, I'm just like any other company boss, gingering up the boys all the time, except I don't make money. I just kill people, and save lives."

Is this Sixties journalism? I suspect it is just very good journalism. The best of the material reflects certain basic rules which have always governed the craft: attention to detail, good quotes, a sense of place. Some of it is, of course, a part of Sixties history, like William Mann, the music critic of *The Times*, writing about the Beatles' "flat submediant key switches", William Rees-Mogg on the Rolling Stones drug-bust — "Who Breaks a Butterfly on a Wheel?" — or Maureen Cleave quoting John Lennon, "We're more popular than Jesus now."

Others are thrilling to read because of the events themselves: Hugh McIlvanney on the 1966 World Cup Final, as good as any of Buchan or Kipling's sporting tales; David Leitch inside Khe Sanh as terrified US soldiers wait for it to fall; Tony Geraghty on Aberfan, a sparse and moving account of death and disaster.

■ IN THE SIXTIES
Edited by Ray Connolly
(Pavilion £16.99)

But there is something here that may indeed be of its time: a sense that good writing is being given its head, that newspapers are in sympathy with the journalist rather than the market. Kenneth Tynan, at *The Lady Chatterley* trial, circles Mervyn Griffiths-Jones, the prosecuting counsel, with leisurely precision: "high-cheekboned, and poker-backed ... a voice passionate only in disdain, but barbed with a belief in convention"; Maurice Richardson's description of the Moors murder trial ("If those two were sane, they'd have gone mad long ago"), is head and shoulders above anything I have read about the West case.

Not everything stands up. John Crosby's famous piece on Swinging London now looks dated. *The Sunday Times* Insight is ponderous on Profumo. Germaine Greer has written better since then.

By and large, however, this is as good a collection as I have read since John Carey's *Faber Book of Reportage*. There is a journalistic insouciance about it, an arrogance even, which suggests an era that had cheek. That seems to have been lost. But perhaps I am trapped in the myth.

Ken Saro-Wiwa's detention diary

Eloquent cry of the Ogoni

■ A MONTH AND A DAY
By Ken Saro-Wiwa
Penguin, £6.99

KEN SARO-WIWA was hanged on November 10, at a prison in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, for a crime no one believes he committed. An array of persons and bodies — from Nelson Mandela to *The Times*, Ben Okri to The Body Shop, the Commonwealth heads of government to ordinary Nigerians — campaigned actively to prevent his judicial murder. They failed.

How does one review the work of a man who was executed only a month ago? The book was written in 1994, when Saro-Wiwa spent "a month and a day" in prison for political activities deemed by the Nigerian military junta to be treasonable. It is a book at once eerie and inspiring. "In the quest for justice for my people," he wrote in a fetid cell, "neither prison nor the threat of death, nor death itself, could ever deter me."

Saro-Wiwa's detention diary is a patchwork of reminiscences, the work of a man whose sense of foreboding matched his sense of duty. There are intriguing glimpses of his human side folded into long paragraphs on the condition of the Ogoni people and land. Africa's most famous pipe-smoker liked his comforts, but his commitment to the cause he elected to embrace — the cause of which he was effectively prime mover — cannot be open to question. William Boyd, in an introduction whose eloquent anguish is not marred by his tenuous grasp of the detail of Nigerian politics, describes Saro-Wiwa as "the bravest man I have known".

Read the book. It will teach you why General Abacha, the despot who runs Nigeria so cruelly, wanted to finish off Saro-Wiwa. For the writer was an eloquent man, and eloquence, when put to the service of social justice and a fight against corruption, is dangerous. Saro-Wiwa, you could almost say, died because he used words well.

The work is a gutsy, stylish political tract. Such tracts are not written in the West any more; perhaps we no longer need to fight for essential causes. But in Nigeria, a noble fight goes on. The Ogoni, a tiny ethnic group which sits on oil-rich land, yet sees little of the money earned, "suffer as grass in the fight of the elephants". Saro-Wiwa's crime was to set that grass alight, thus burning the soles of the elephants' feet. *A Month and A Day* ends with a promise by the author to continue his narration in his next book, "if I live to tell the tale". He did not.

TUNKU VARADARAJAN

A roundup for the armchair traveller

Tackling the Taklamakan

TRAVEL books can divide into three types: the stunt, the story, the journey. The first has been the most misused: in the 1980s bookshops were flooded with one-legged Andean donkey rides. Of the second, such as Charles Nicholl's fevered cocaine trail in *The Fruit Palace*, there have been too few. The third category is the most common: from Jonathan Raban's *Old Glory* and Colin Thubron's *Behind the Wall*, to a thousand poor imitations.

Stunts, however, have always found publishers, particularly when they are as spectacular as that attempted by Charles Blackmore. A former Greenjackets officer, he describes his crossing of the Taklamakan desert in northwest China in **The Worst Desert on Earth** (John Murray, £16.99).

While a handful of explorers had traversed north-to-south, none had crossed the 800 east-west miles, where dunes rise to more than 1,000m. Blackmore, who had retraced Lawrence of Arabia's steps through the Jordanian and Arabian deserts, writes that the crossing "was to change the course of my life".

It was an achievement which took two months, 30 camels, a crew of hardy amateurs and cynical Chinese. When the expedition left Markit, near Kashgar, weeping women lined the road, convinced none would escape alive. Yet, miraculously, they did: only one camel died.

Blackmore records the struggles with diarrhoea and equipment, and falls to racist generalisations: "Two races could not have been less alike — the bravado and devil-may-care insouciance of the largely irrepressible British spirit and the suspicious, distrustful and almost childlike insecurity of the Chinese". Blackmore is a clear writer, but he fails to produce psychological or poetic insights.

As stunts go, however, Blackmore has nothing on Rory Spowers's **Three Men on a Bike** (Canongate, £9.99). He and two friends crossed Africa on the Goodies' cycle, the three-seater "trandem".

The prose struggles to keep pace. In the epilogue, Spowers is forced to admit that "from the start I knew that I was not really a writer", which is honest but disheartening. Near the end of the journey Spowers sacrifices a testicle to a tumour and concludes: "I am part of One thing and what matters is that Oneness." Is this a joke?

The Smile of Murugan

Melanie McGrath has constructed a finer book from her exploration of New Age America at the end of the 20th century, the "century in which America finally became too big for itself". In **Motel Nirvana: Dreaming of the New Age in the American Desert** (HarperCollins, £16.99), she shows herself to be a flexible and thoughtful writer, by turns witty and considered.

She tours the Midwest and the Mexico border, never losing her wry detachment, dividing her quest into sections: crazies, cults, landscape, Billy the Kid. Her gift for detail makes the book hum.

Dyan Sheldon has also attempted an American journey, first across the USA, then down South America to Peru. But, unlike McGrath, **On the Road Reluctantly** (Little Brown, £16.99) lacks urgency, and too often the jokes fall flat.

Christina Dodwell's **Madagascar Travels** (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99) is a journey of typical harshness, undertaken with typical eccentricity — this time in a horse-drawn buggy through the wild interior. Dodwell's intellect is as blunt as ever, her prose as leaden. Too many sentences begin: "One good thing about ..." Madagascar, for Dodwell, also seems to lack a romantic pull.

By contrast, **The Smile of Murugan: A South Indian Journey** (Viking, £18), by the BBC reporter Michael Wood, feels intensely personal. Over the years, Wood and his wife have spent many months in Tamil Nadu, the 500-mile-long state in India's southeast corner. While this gives the book an episodic feel, it also means that Wood has approached a native's understanding of the people.

Picador has just published four Travel Classics: Alexander Kinglake's *Eothen* (£13), Edith Wharton's *A Motor-Flight Through France* (£13), Gavin Young's *Slow Boats to China* (£15) and Jonathan Raban's *Coasting* (£13).

EDWARD MARRIOTT

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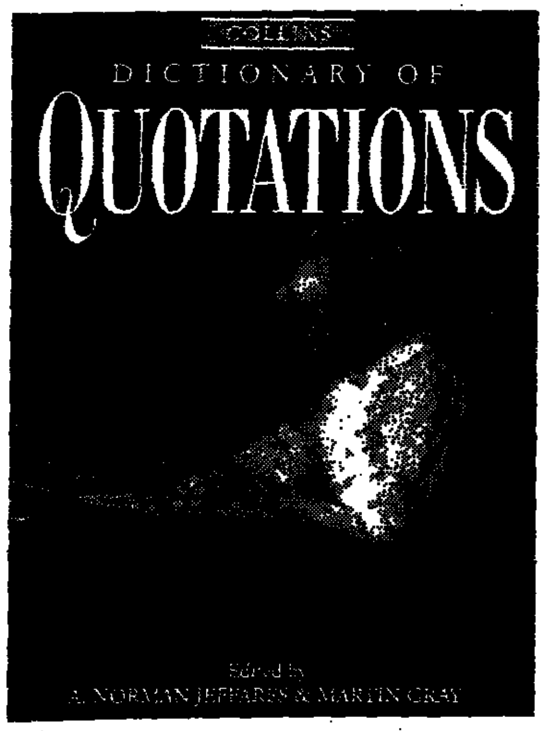
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Our critics pick the year's top releases

Z-movie masterpiece: Edward D. Wood's sci-fi film, *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, comes with zombie acting, tinpot sets, collapsing props and absurd dialogue — yet it remains a must for the video collection

VIDEO

■ PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE

Pickwick, PG, 1956

NO VIDEO collection is complete without something by Edward D. Wood Jr, the Z-movie mastermind celebrated in Tim Burton's biopic *Ed Wood*. This sci-fi tale is his *chef d'oeuvre*: it is beyond bad, but in no other film do zombie acting, tinpot sets, collapsing props and absurd dialogue combine to cast such a hypnotic spell. No home should also be without *Glen or Glenda* (1953), Wood's clumsy, and touching film about men's urge to don women's clothing.

☐ CHOOSE ME

Arrow, 15, 1983

LA misfits exchange partners, memories and psychological musings. So many pleasures in Alan Rudolph's quirky film: the performances, the touch of fantasy in the sets, the slow crescendo of comedy. Central characters are a radio counsellor with hang-ups of her own (Genevieve Bujold), a refugee from a mental hospital (Keith Carradine), and a singles-bar proprietress (Lesley Ann Warren). Rudolph directs with the skill of a choreographer.

☐ FLESH AND THE DEVIL

MGM/UA, U, 1927

GRETA Garbo and John Gilbert making love with their eyes, kisses and caresses is silent cinema at its most romantic. He is a nobleman, she a temptress, and director Clarence Brown surrounds the pair with exquisite images. A marvellous product of the 1920s dream factory.

☐ HOOP DREAMS

Feature Film Company, 15, 1994

A THREE-hour documentary about basketball? Sounds frightful. But Steve James, Fred Marx and Peter Gilbert have fashioned something more like the Great American Novel transferred to film. For more than four years their cameras pursued two teenagers with partial baseball scholarships to the same school. Parents go on welfare, a ligament gets torn, a father drifts into drugs. A wonderfully absorbing portrait of the American dream.

☐ PINOCCHIO

Disney, U, 1940

NO OTHER Disney classic boasts the variety and dash of this version of Carlo Collodi's tale. One minute there's brilliant animation of thrashing whales and assorted childhood fears; the next, in comes Cleo, the goldfish with eyelashes, and a fairy sweeter than Tate and Lyle combined. Strengths, weaknesses — they're all here in a bumper bundle.

☐ QUE LA BETE MEURE

Art House, 15, 1969

ONE of Claude Chabrol's very best: a bleak, haunting thriller about a bereaved father (Michel Duchaussoy) obsessed with finding the reckless driver who killed his young son. Jean Yanne, as his prey, creates one of Chabrol's greatest bourgeois slobs, although the social satire pales beside the film's moral ambiguity and mournful acknowledgement that all roads lead to death.

☐ RASHOMON

Connoisseur, 12, 1950

KUROSAWA'S mesmerising film introduced Western audiences to Japanese cinema. An ambush, a rape and murder are viewed from four different perspectives. Where does the truth lie? Hard to say; far easier to note the director's grasp of the human character, and his use of cinema's resources. Toshiro Mifune plays the bandit who attacks a nobleman and his wife.

☐ VIRIDIANA

Electric, 15, 1961

BUNUEL returned to Spain from his Mexican exile to make this wonderfully sly film about a young nun (Silvia Pina) and her fate at the hands of her attentive uncle, local peasants and beggars. In the most famous sequence, a beggars' banquet slips into an outrageous parody of the Last Supper. Funny, cynical, and disturbing.

GEOFF BROWN

The unbeatable Alfredo Kraus sings Lalo; Radiohead's uplifting songs; Hans Zender's interpretation of Schubert; and the volcanic Mingus Big Band

Cheryl Studer in Lehár's *Die Lustige Witwe*

OPERA

John Higgins

BEST Opera: Rossini's *La Cenerentola* came out faultless from Teldec (94553-2, two CDs), with **Jennifer Larmore** in the title role slipping effortlessly from abused child to royal wife, dispensing forgiveness all round. It is an ensemble piece and Carlo Rizzi realises that with a handpicked cast. The Covent Garden orchestra shows just what it can do when the right man holds the baton.

The runner-up: **Barenboim**'s stirring *Tristan*, Bayreuth based but studio recorded by Teldec (94568-2, four CDs).

Best Operetta: Lehár narrowly makes it over Strauss. DG packed all of *Die Lustige Witwe* onto one disc (DG 439 911-2), with **Cheryl Studer** saving her country as the Widow. Pontevedro also has good reason to be grateful for the feather-light touch that John Eliot Gardiner manages to bring to the Vienna Philharmonic. But spare a copper also for the Vienna Symphony in *Der Zigeunerbaron* (Teldec 94552-2, two CDs) under Harnoncourt.

Best Recital: **Alfredo Kraus** in *Alfredo Kraus, The Incomparable* (Philips 442 785-2) proved that even in his mid-sixties there is no one to beat him in the pure bel canto repertoire. His beloved Donizetti is prominent, but even more welcome are tastes of roles he will never sing on stage, including the Italian Tenor's aria from *Rosenkavalier*. Best of all is the lilting aubade from Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys*, gone in a twinkling and so a track to be played again and again.

Most Welcome Discovery: Auber's *Le Domino noir* (Decca 440 646-2, two CDs), dusted down by **Richard Bonynge** and the English Chamber Orchestra so that it comes up fresh, French and frothy. **Sumi Jo** sparkles away as a fun-loving novice who decides that marrying a Spanish nobleman is a better bet than entering a nunnery. Whoopi Goldberg beware.

ROCK

David Sinclair

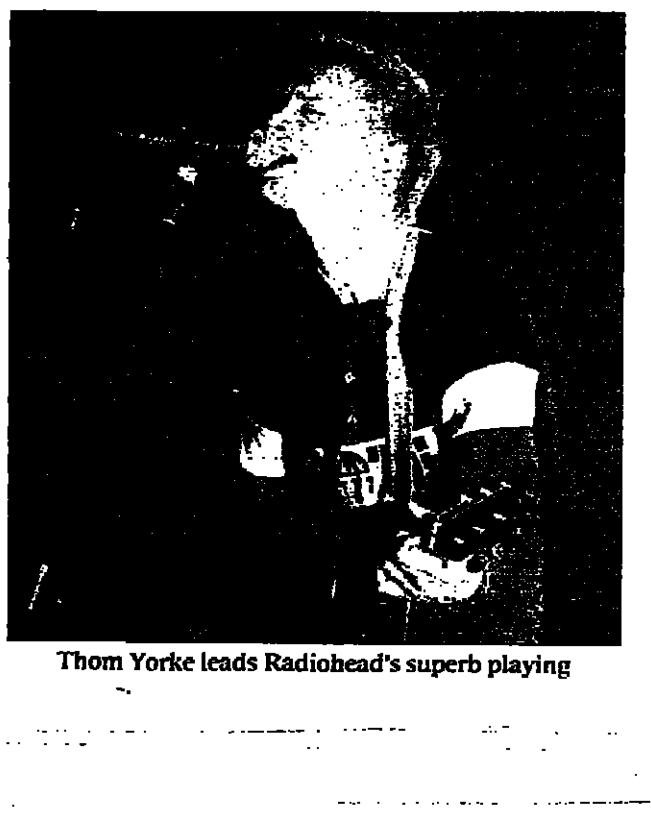
THE Bends by **Radiohead** (Parlophone 8 29626) was easily the best rock album of the year. More than a compelling collection of superbly written and played songs, it captured the essence of the frighteningly dysfunctional emotions that seem to be abroad in the 1990s and turned it into something uplifting. "I wish I could be happy, I wish, I wish, I wish," Thom Yorke sang on the title track. I hope now he is.

While the surviving Beatles disfigured their reputation with a grotesquely hyped retrospective, their old rivals the **Rolling Stones** (Virgin 41040) quietly put out *Stripped*, a lively and affectionate trawl through their (mainly) acoustic back pages that was a match for any of the live and/or *Unplugged* albums which preceded it. Old vices die hard, and I continue to enjoy it not least for its authenticity and wiry simplicity.

Back in the modern world, the Britpop battles raged between Blur, Oasis and the rest, but it was the geezerish **Black Grape** who overhauled them all with *It's Great When You're Straight ... Yeah*, a jubilantly bumptious record that can turn the most mundane living space into a party zone at the flick of a switch.

It was indeed a vintage year for rock, but as it went on I found myself returning with increasing frequency to jazz trumpeter **Guy Barker**'s debut, *Into The Blue*. Part of the attraction was undoubtedly the extraordinary standard of musicianship on offer and the absence of all that vainglorious posturing that you get in rock. But the wonderful clarity of the themes, the hairpin twists in the horn arrangements (played by Barker and alto saxophonist Sigurdur Flosason), and the elegant zest of the improvisational passages made this an exceptional album by any standards.

Honourable mentions must also go to *Foo Fighters* by **Foo Fighters**, *Days Like This* by **Van Morrison**, *Garbage* by **Garbage**, *Tilt* by **Scott Walker** and *Ballbreaker* by the implausibly rampant **AC/DC**.



Thom Yorke leads Radiohead's superb playing

CLASSICAL 1

Barry Millington

FOR most people it has been Purcell year, but for me it has been another great one for Handel. *Giustino* is the latest, and perhaps the best, of Harmonia Mundi's invaluable series of operas and oratorios under **Nicholas McGegan**. But it has to yield in the final selection to the new Chandos recording of Handel's early Italian cantata, *Apollo e Dafne* (CHAN 0583), which has given me inordinate pleasure this year. It is fortunate that we no longer rely on vinyl and styli, otherwise I would certainly have worn track 11 thin by now: **Michael George**'s singing of the aria *Come rosa in su la spina*, with impeccably stylish accompaniment by Collegium Musicum 90 under **Simon Standage**, is unalloyed bliss. The disc also offers the splendid **Nancy Argenta** and a second cantata, *Crudel tiranno Amor*.

Anne Sofie von Otter sings Schumann Lieder

Another disc to which I have returned again and again is that of Schumann Lieder sung by **Anne Sofie von Otter** (DG 445 881-2). It includes the well-known *Frauenliebe und Leben*, that cycle to problematic texts by Chamisso, which von Otter makes more involving, more convincing than ever before in my experience. But there are also 20 other songs, the emotional range of which is encompassed with peerless subtlety and musicianship by both singer and pianist — Bengt Forsberg is far more than mere accompanist.

Roger Norrington's disc of Wagner Preludes (EMI CDC 5 55479 2) is a welcome antidote to a century of ever more inflated and turgid performance practice. Norrington persuasively posits brisk tempi for both *Meistersinger* and *Tristan* Preludes, while also deriving exquisitely individual sonorities (*Parsifal* Prelude and *Siegfried* Idyll) from gut strings, period wind and narrow-bore brass.

Korngold's *Sinfonietta* (CHAN 9317), the work of an astonishingly precocious 14-year-old, is so effusively inventive, so richly scored, that one can easily understand the enthusiasm of Strauss, Sibelius and others. Branded "degenerate" by the Nazis, the Sinfonietta should be re-established in the repertoire by this exhilarating performance under **Matthias Bamert**.

CLASSICAL 2

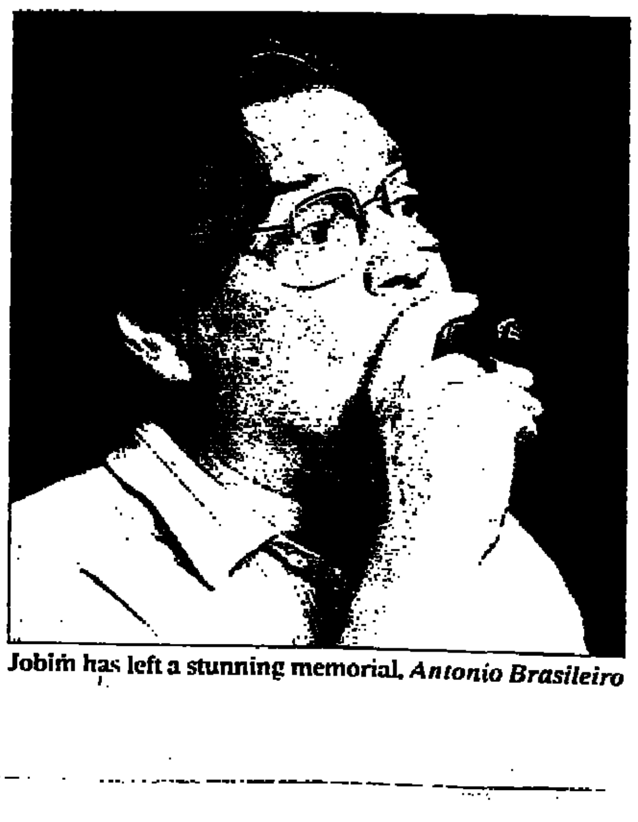
Hilary Finch

IN A year of several truly great performances, and many quirky and enterprising additions to the catalogue, I grit my teeth and pick just two from each category. First, the deeply considered performance of Schubert's *Piano Sonata D960* from **Stephen Kovacevich** (EMI 5 55359 2), which richly complements his revelatory Beethoven sonata series.

And then **Bryn Terfel**'s wonderfully word-lively programme of Vaughan Williams, Butterworth, Finzi and Irelan, *The Vagabond*, (DG 445 946-2). Terfel's insistence that English is only his second language may well account for his fresh approach to these songs, with not a second of their often familiar words and notes taken for granted.

Then, two discs which have jolted ear and mind to a new understanding of each composer involved. **The Swedish Yggdrasil Quartet** (currently in residence at Aberdeen University) have honoured their own name — that of the great World Tree of the Edda's mythology — by being brave enough to champion the string quartets of Iceland's musical pioneer, Jon Leifs (BIS CD 691). It is high time that these entirely distinctive works, written between 1939 and 1965, were given the performances of quality and the wider distribution they deserve. The first one speaks in Leifs's spare language; the second commemorates his young drowned daughter; the third celebrates El Greco. Anyone taking the risk of discovery for the first time is unlikely to be disappointed.

Footsteps in the snow may well never sound the same again after listening to **Hans Zender**'s "composed interpretation" of Schubert's *Winterreise*. A baying hound of the Baskervilles, a haunting harmonium, and more than a pre-echo of an Expressionist frisson join tenor Hans Peter Blochwitz and the Ensemble Modern for a performance which is great fun (RCA 09026 68067 2), but also more serious than it may at first seem.



Jobim has left a stunning memorial, *Antonio Brasileiro*

JAZZ

Clive Davis

THEY came, they saw, they blew the roof off. Dedicated to the memory of the late Charles Mingus, **The Mingus Big Band** steamrollered every audience it encountered during its British tour. Boasting updated settings of *Fables of Faubus* and *Reincarnation of a Lovebird*, the volcanic studio session, *Gunslinging Birds* (Dreyfus FDM 36575), captured the all-or-nothing ethos and consummate musicianship of these free spirits.

Of all the young players on the New York scene, the pianist **Jacky Terrasson** seems the most likely candidate for stardom. His eponymous debut album (Blue Note CDP8-29351) was a supremely confident trio set, mixing rhythmically audacious interpretations of *I Love Paris* and other standards with his impressionistic *Hommage à Lili Boulanger*.

As for the old guard, the saxophonist **Bud Shank** led a buoyant piano-less sextet through a collection of bravura arrangements on *New Gold!* (Candid CCD79707).

John Coltrane was among the beneficiaries of the new programme of immaculately packaged reissues on the Impulse! label. He is at his most lyrical on *John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman* (GRD-157), a meeting with a crooner whose voice found a new audience this year, courtesy of the soundtrack of *The Bridges of Madison County*.

No question as to the album that I listened to most this year. The peerless Brazilian composer **Antonio Carlos Jobim**, who died almost a year ago, left a stunning memorial in *Antonio Brasileiro* (Columbia 476281), a vocal album to match those Sixties bossa nova collaborations with Stan Getz. Sting's guest appearance on *How Insensitive* was one of the high points of a wide-ranging collection.

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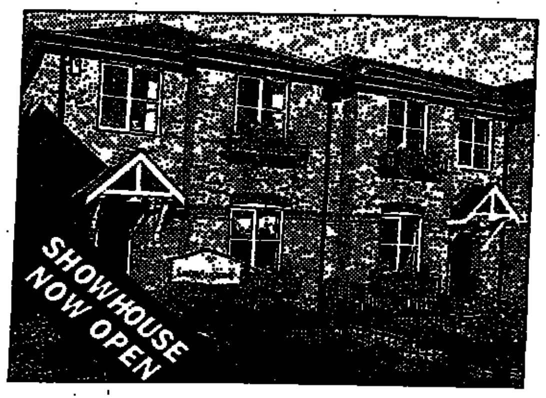

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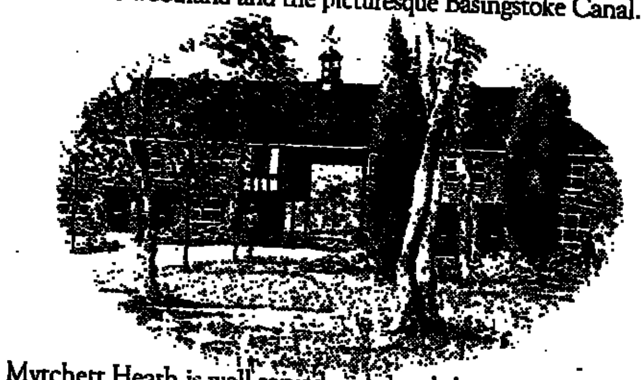

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BUILD WITH CARE

Laverstoke Estate in Hampshire has everything money can buy, says **Rachel Kelly**, but the For Sale sign may not

Old traditions bow to new money

At first sight, you might think Laverstoke was the most perfect country estate in England. It may have helped that when I visited this yellow brick, classical Hampshire country house, set in 3,200 acres, on a crisp autumn day, the trees were still in leaf, the crops high and the estate, up for sale for £10 million, was at its best.

It has all the ingredients of the archetypal English seat, and lies next to the hamlet of Freefolk, just past Overton, near Basingstoke. Its entrance is guarded by Freefolk Lodge, and a drive, flanked by mature trees set in parkland, sweeps up to the Grade II-listed house. It was built between 1796 and 1798 for Henry Portal by the influential Italian architect Joseph Bonomi, and extended northwards during the 19th century.

Visitors arrive at the East front, set behind an oval lawn. Inside, the principal rooms are arranged around a galleried central hall. The Yellow sitting room, with marble fireplace and ornate leaf cornicing, central plaster rose and double-height, shuttered sash windows, overlooks the formal gardens to the west and south. But the best views of all are those from the house through the parkland towards the agricultural land beyond. The estate has everything from chalk uplands to the lush lowlands of the Test, regarded as one of the best trout streams in the country, and Laverstoke owns 1.4 miles of it along with a lake and a trout farm. There is also a pheasant and partridge shoot, mature woodlands, 1,600 acres of vacant farmland, and 1,000 acres subject to an agricultural tenancy, plus a walled garden and a gardener's cottage, which are let to a nursery, and a cricket field with thatched pavilion.

The estate exudes serenity, yet it is only an hour-and-a-half from London by car on the M3. It is easy to imagine that this is the home of a family which has been there for generations. But typically, like many country estates in recent years, its ownership has been chequered. It is not the home of an English family but effectively part of a business. For decades the prohibitive cost of running such a large pile has meant a complicated tenancy.

The estate is not being sold by a family but by the printing company De La Rue. The firm acquired this hidden asset earlier this year when it took over Portals, the banknote paper-maker, for £716.7 million. The estate had originally been owned by a Portal family trust, though company records do not reveal when the trustees took over the house. During the war, the trustees transferred the trust and the estate into the business that the family founded. After the war, the Portal family ceased to have a connection with the house. Julian Sheffield, lately chairman of Portals, is still living there because De La Rue is honouring the arrangement that Mr Sheffield had with Portals. He is due to move out by August 1996. Mr Sheffield's tenancy came to light in the months running up to De La Rue's bid. The arrangement was dubbed "the fabulous freebie" in the business press.

'Tycoons are buying for one generation, not the future'

He pays the running costs of the house, but no rent. Portals will not disclose how much these running costs are, saying that the bills are paid by Mr Sheffield.

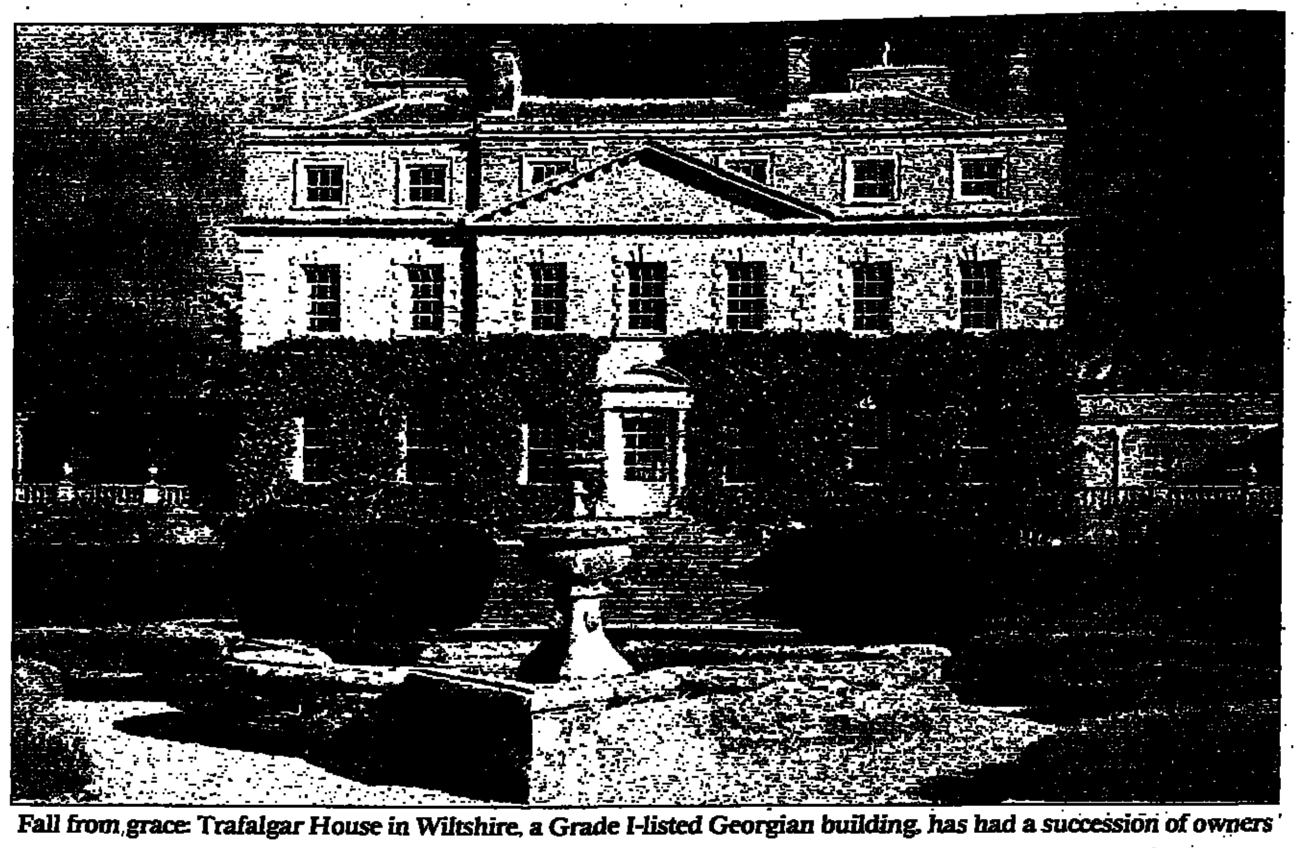
In recent years Portals had sold some of the houses and land on the estate. In 1990, Mr Sheffield bought one of the houses from the company, at market price after shareholder approval.

Although Mr Sheffield was responsible for Laverstoke House, Portals ran the estate, which was effectively a business venture. The company's headquarters were at Laverstoke Mill House, a converted stable block, which was sold after the De La Rue take over.

The main estate has been up for sale since September. Savills believes that it could be bought as a whole, and says there is much interest. But it is more likely to sell in lots, unremarked. Local farmers are especially interested in the farmland. The fishing will probably be let by its new owner.

Perhaps an hotel chain will buy the house, or it will be converted into flats by a property developer. Five flats at the back of the main house had been let by Portals at commercial rents, three are at present occupied on assured shorthold tenancies, and could continue to be let if a new owner desired.

Laverstoke is not the kind of house or estate that a newly wealthy tycoon would want, concludes William Gething, who co-runs the buyers' agent Property Vision, which purchases properties for the wealthy and famous. In the past they might have, but, it appears, that era is about to die with the 20th century.



Fall from grace: Trafalgar House in Wiltshire, a Grade I-listed Georgian building, has had a succession of owners

Perhaps aping the old world of landed money and tradition - is no longer appropriate for the late '90s tycoon. For generations, entrepreneurs have aspired to live graciously. Make your pile, the logic went, then buy one. And so Australian tycoon Alan Bond bought the village of Glympton, near Woodstock, Oxfordshire, for £14 million complete with stately home in 1991.

Fellow businessman Victor Watkins, a property developer, bought the village of Salperton, near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, with its 11-bedroom house, 1,748 acres, 170 cows, 600 sheep and rights to partridge and pheasant shooting in 1981 for £3 million. Both estates have since been re-sold: Glympton for a rumoured £10 million to an unnamed buyer, Salperton for £8 million to the telecommunications tycoon Barry Houghton.

While many a 1980s tycoon made their fortunes in property, the 1990s equivalents have succeeded in media, silicon graphics, cable, venture capital or home-shopping. Do they really want to put their entrepreneurial fortunes in crumbling bricks and mortar surrounded by unmanageable acres?

Evidence suggests not. The past five years have seen a reversal in the fortunes of great country houses and estates. First a definition: "estate" equals a large house with a dozen or so cottages, at least 1,000 acres, plus shooting and fishing. New money — with few exceptions — does not want traditional country houses with their supporting estates. They don't need a farm to support the house. In the past, says Bertie Ross from Savills, a general rule of thumb was that a buyer needed around 400 acres to support each bedroom. Now, £200,000 in the bank at four per cent interest does the same job.

Modern moguls would rather have smaller, more manageable property closer to Heathrow. Patrick Ramsay, from Knight Frank & Rutley, says that the recession has taught tycoons that they must be at the coalface of their businesses. "Some who were tempted at the end of the 1980s have thought again. These people are workaholics. We will wait and see whether they buy these houses when they retire."

If businessmen do buy these historic houses, they often don't stay long. The sorry tale of Trafalgar House, including a spectacular Grade I-listed Georgian house six miles south of Salisbury, Wiltshire, is instructive.

Built in 1733, the Dawkins family bought the house in 1766 and lived there until 1814, when a grateful nation gave the house to Admiral Nelson's brother and renamed it Trafalgar after the famous victory. The property passed down through the family to the 4th Earl of Nelson, who died, unmarried, in 1947.

Since then it has had a succession of owners. The latest was Mr Gunnar Bengtsson, a Swedish entrepreneur, who had plans

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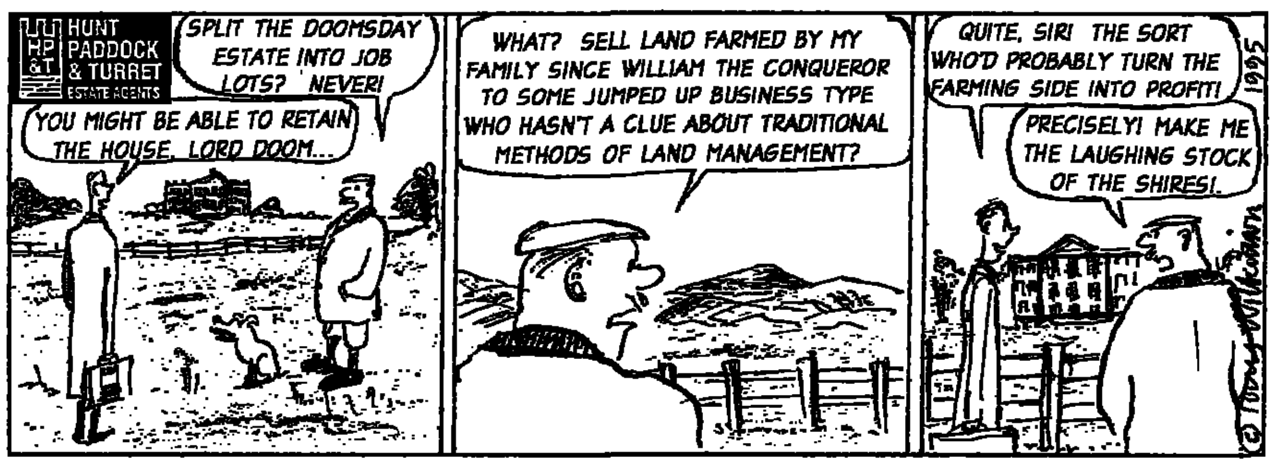
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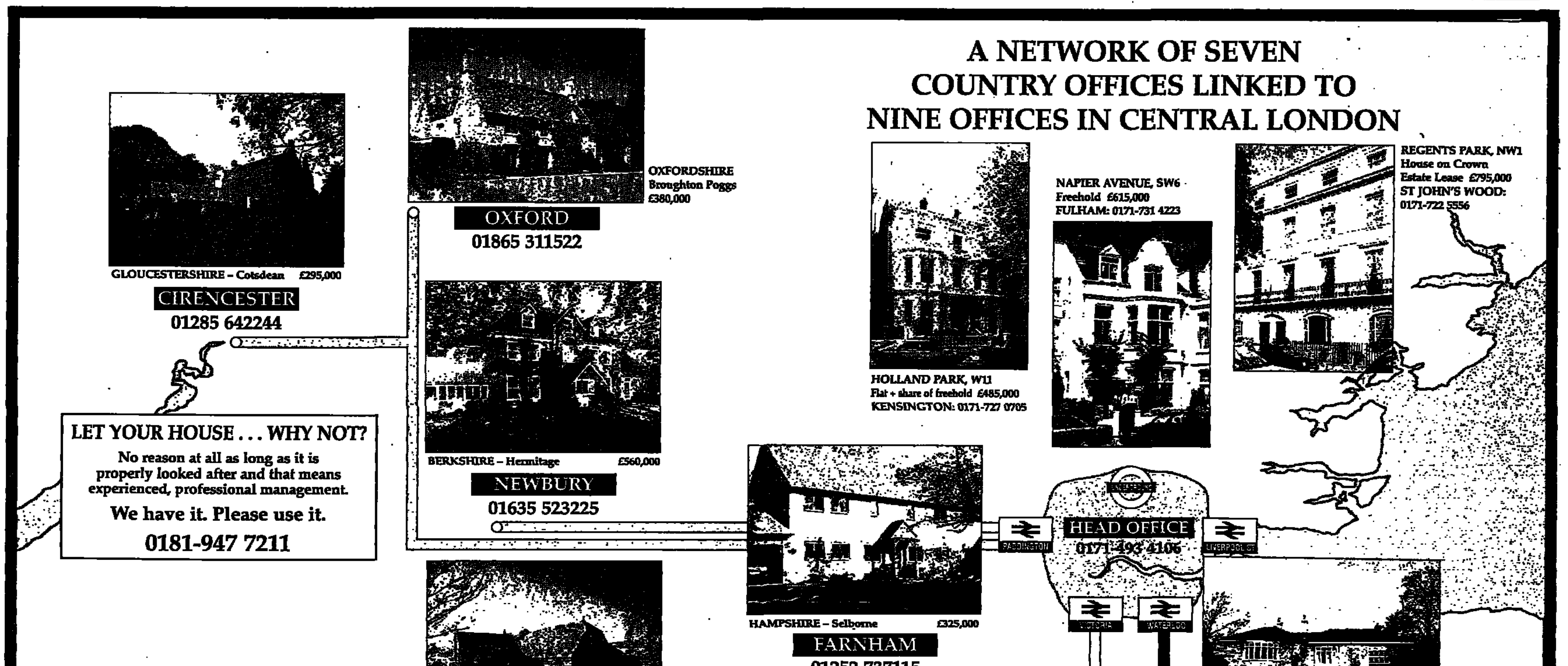

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tempt modern moguls, who prefer smaller, more manageable properties. Is this trend steadily eroding our heritage?

Package deal: The Grade II-listed Laverstoke House was built in 1796-98. The estate is available as a whole but may be sold in lots, including, below, Northington Farm, Southington Lodge and fishing rights on the river Test

Continued from page 12

for a hotel. He bought it in 1990 for an estimated £2 million. The house has just been resold after Mr Bengtsson abandoned ship for £1.5 million to an unnamed buyer.

There are tax advantages connected with buying a big estate. New buyers typically will have made their wealth in anything but agriculture. The majority will fund their purchase by selling their company, says Tony Morris-Eyton. of Knight Frank and Rutley.

"They are able to roll over the proceeds of these sales into a farming estate without paying capital gains tax. Once the estate has been bought, subject to various criteria, the estate is free of inheritance tax."

But Mr Gething counters: "The trophy houses of the 1980s are no longer appropriate. In an age when few still believe in primogeniture, tycoons are buying for one generation, not the future."

Patrick Ramsay agrees. "The increasing international nature of business has widened people's horizons so a number of executives are no longer buying an estate in the country but a house on Cap Ferrat."

A host of examples in the past two or three years shows how the appeal of historic houses is waning. They often take time to sell: the larger the house, the slower the sale. For example, Chilham castle in Kent in 290 acres of surrounding farmland, on the market for 23 months and with a £500,000 price drop to £3 million, is still for sale by the family of Viscount Massereene and Ferrard.

Or they are bought and resold quickly, the owners having changed their minds. The Pickenham Hall estate in Norfolk was sold in 1988 for £6 million and again in July 1993 for £8 million to unidentified buyers. Druids Lodge Estate sold in 1989 for £10 million and again in 1993 for the same price to unnamed buyers.

A minority of other estates have been broken up into lots. Tythrop Park is an estate on the Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire border. The 12-bedroom house and its 584 acres, lodge and five estate houses was sold by the Cotton family in six lots in 1994, the main lot being the house and 11 acres.

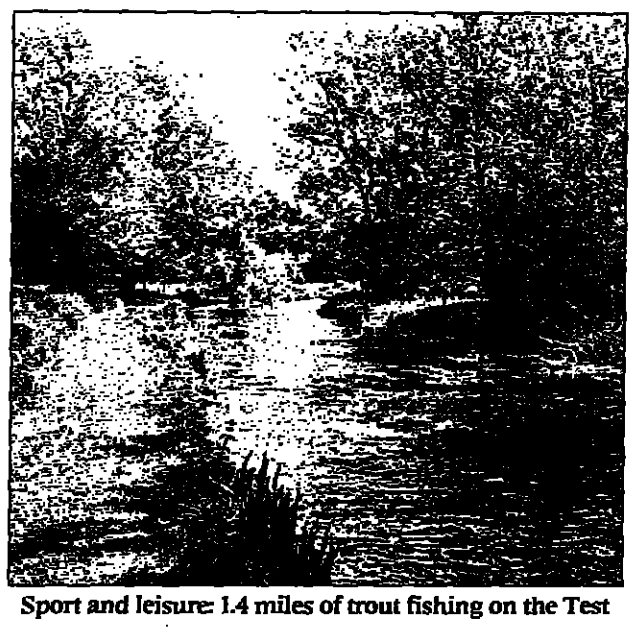
The farm: Northington Farm, subject to an agricultural tenancy, includes the farmhouse, 1,002 acres and eight cottages

Barkfold Manor estate near Kirdford, West Sussex, was originally put up for sale as a whole with a guide price of £2.5 million, and then relaunched six months later in 11 lots. Ultimately, the seller retained the main house and two further lots but sales were agreed on the other eight. The West Grinstead Park Estate in West Sussex was broken up into more than 60 lots.

"Fewer buyers now aspire to the lifestyle that an estate offers," Mr Gething says. "Often foreign buyers think they might want to buy one of these large houses. Then we talk them through the implications and responsibilities, and they think again."

These buildings are hugely expensive to maintain. The average historic house costs £80,000 a year to run but there are no tax breaks, says the Historic Houses Association, which has 1,400 members. Improvements are zero-rated for VAT, but repairs are taxed at the full 17.5 per cent.

There were only 23 owners of historic houses out of an estimated 400 who received English Heritage grants towards repair bills last year. This compares with 69 in 1988 and only seven in 1992.



Sport and leisure: 1.4 miles of trout fishing on the Test

Members of the French equivalent of the Historic Houses Association, *La Demeure Historique*, with its 2,000 members, received grants ten times larger in total than all government expenditure on English houses. William Proby, president of the Historic Houses Association, and owner of Elton Hall near Peterborough, estimates that his members received around £1 million compared with some £10 million in France.

If buyers are looking for a fancy house, they tend to cherry-pick, buying only the house and a few hundred acres. Ann Gloag, the Scottish businesswoman who bought the Lovat estate in Inverness-shire earlier this year, is typical. While she bought the main house and its surrounding 800 acres for £2 million, she wasn't interested in the 19,500 acres of Scottish Highland on sale, which was broken up into 17 lots and sold to international buyers and local businessmen.

The Historic Houses Association says that we still have about 1,450 estates that have been under the same ownership for three or more generations but 400 sales have taken place since 1970, with an average of 23 a year since 1978.

The trend is led not just by buyers but by sellers. Many landed families have sold estates intact over the years only to see a property developer immediately resell the estate in lots.

Crispin Holborrow from Savills says that previously estate owners might have worried what friends might say in their clubs if they were to rat on generations of history and sell up. "Now they want to get the best price, and that is often achieved through lots."

With a static housing market, but a buoyant farmland one, it makes sense to split the house from its land, says Mr Holborrow. The average value of land with vacant possession has risen by 15 per cent in the first half of 1995, according to Savills' figures. The year-on-year increase now stands at 22 per cent, bringing the total increase since mid-1993 to 48 per cent.

The lodge: Southington sits amid splendid countryside

If the estate is perfect, then it will still sell. This means 1,000 acres, three or four cottages and an attractive house in the centre of the estate with easy access to London but far from motorway noise, says Patrick Ramsay, from Knight Frank & Rutley. It should have good shooting, a bit of water, a period centrepiece, a swimming pool and good security, adds Richard Page, from John D. Wood. The aforementioned Salperton Park, in the Cotswolds, was one such estate that sold as a whole. But most estates are flawed in one way or another.

Does it matter if estates are broken up? William Proby says: "What is different about these houses is the integrity of the whole. People come from all over the world to see estates which families have kept together for generations. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

It matters too, he says, because new owners rarely allow public access. Typically, they are frantic about privacy. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the point of buying a fancy house was to make a splash. Now estate agents are bound by confidentiality clauses, and buyers are often offshore trusts that are impossible to trace.

Without a sustainable market from private buyers, these houses more often than not fall into the commercial market. But interest has dried up there too. The corporate scene is not what it was in the 1980s, Mr Proby says. Only a few exceptional houses, such as Cliveden, the former Astor home, are really viable as successful hotels, and, some might say, even that is a sorry fate for one of the nation's great houses.

● *Laverstoke Estate is for sale through Savills as a whole for £10 million or in eight lots: main house and park for £4.25 million; 1,000-acre Northington Farm (tenanted) £1.2 to £1.5 million; The Home Farm, £250,000; the traditional buildings at the Home Farm, £300,000. No 1 Bere Mill Cottage, £80,000; The Freefolk Fishings, 696 yards of main stream double bank fishing and a trout farm, and lake, £350,000; Laverstoke Grange Farm, with 268 acres, £1.2 million; Upper Norton Farm, with 1,344 acres, £2.5 million. Farmers are expected to be eager for the vacant land.*

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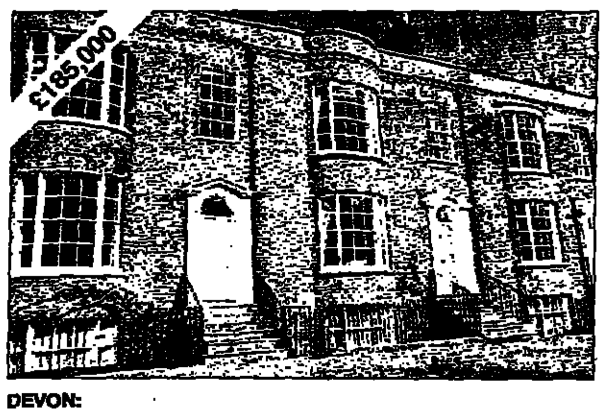

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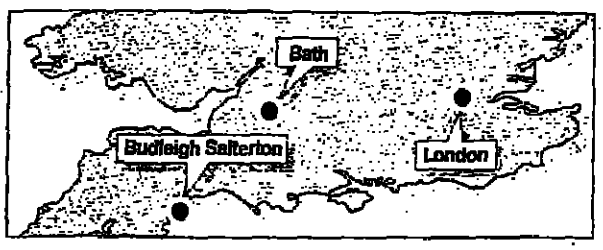

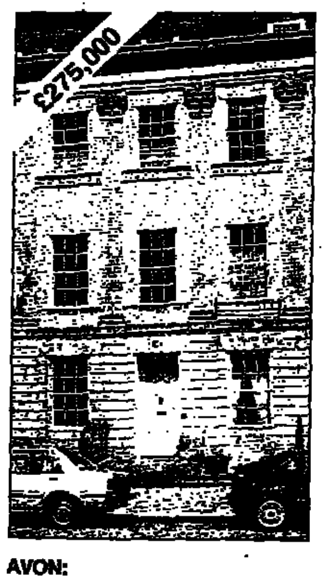

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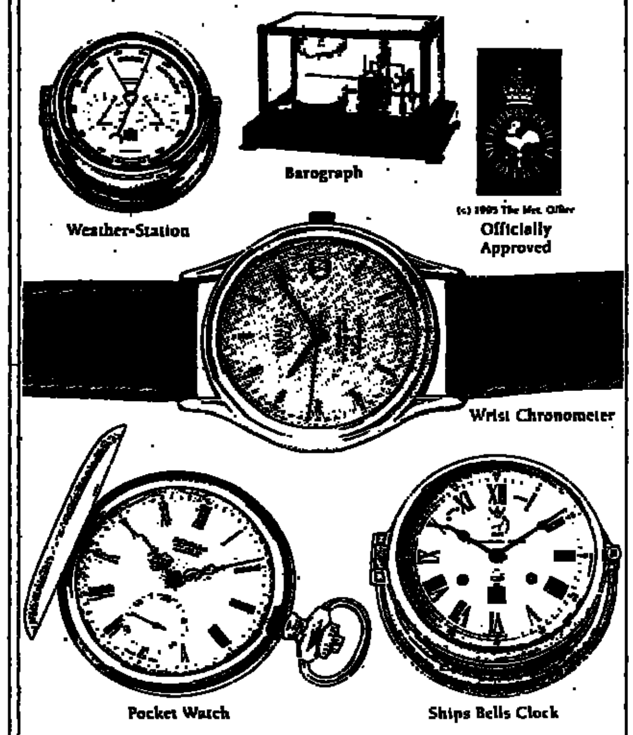

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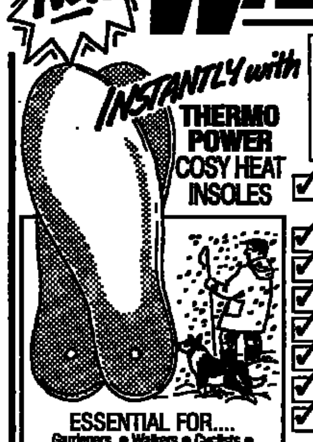

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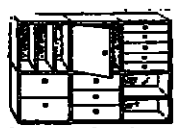

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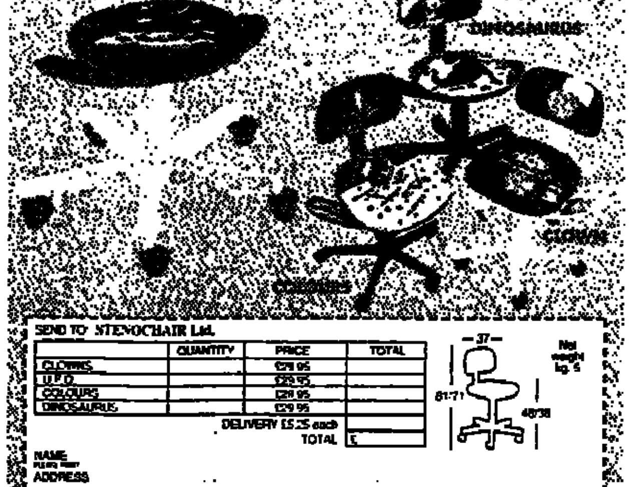

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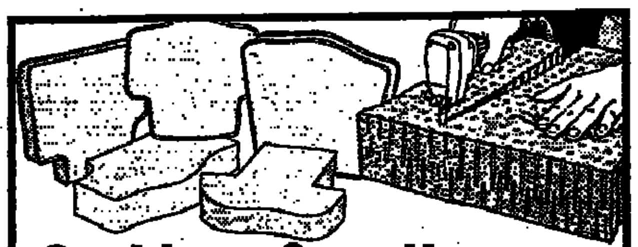

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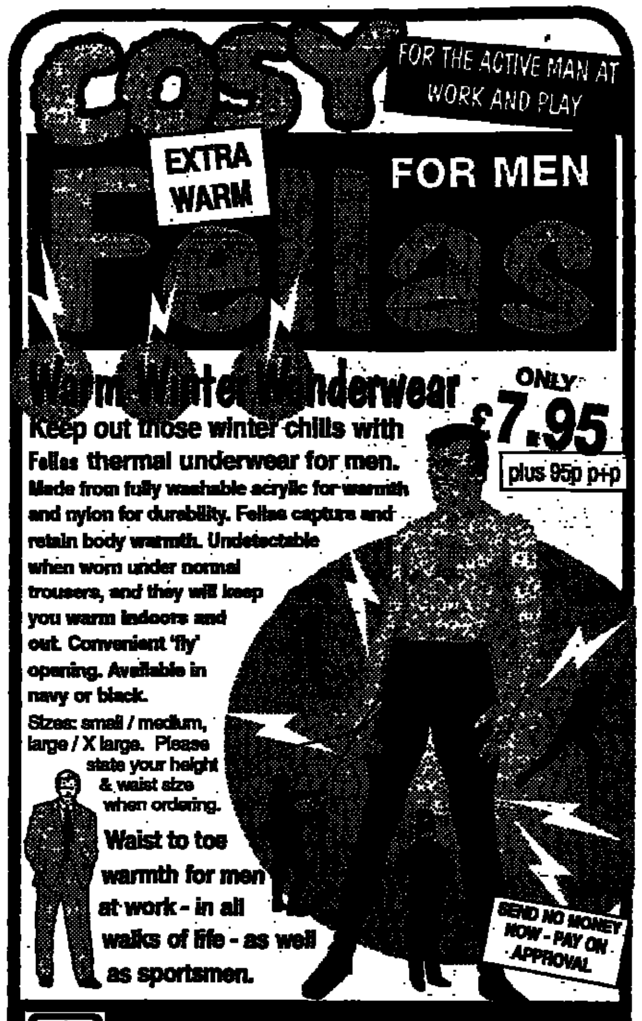
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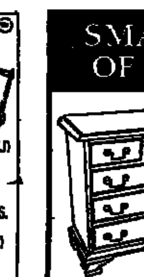

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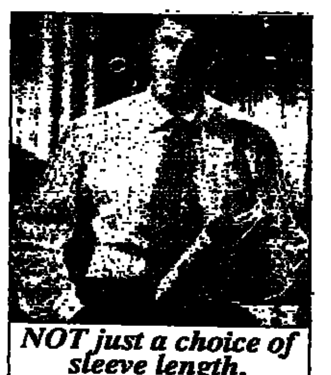

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Tempted for under a tenner

High-street presents that don't cost the earth

There are only 15 shopping days to Christmas, but don't despair or be panicked into a money blitz. Some marvellous stocking fillers and token presents are available on a high street near you, for £10 or less.

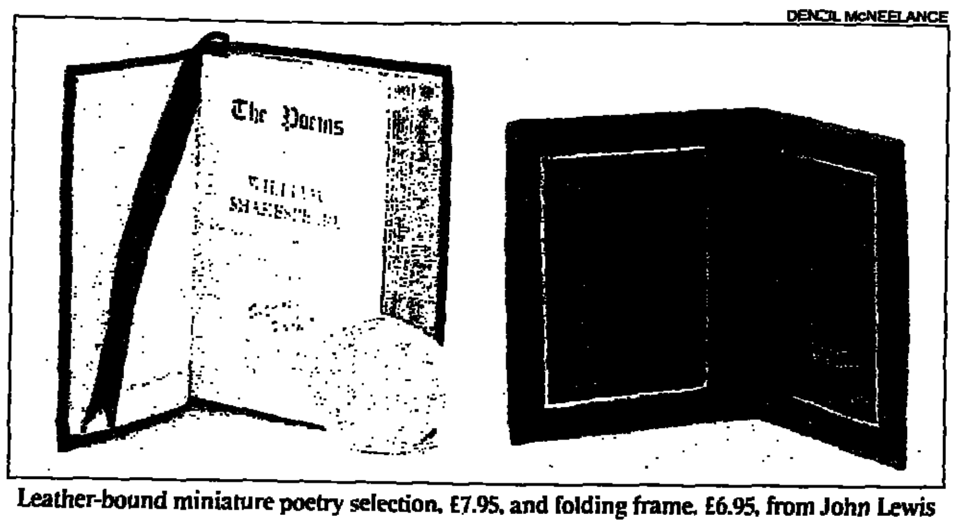
Larger branches of Boots have a wide range of presents, from the Conran-influenced Boots Balance Alarm Clock (£8), which looks like a space module mounted at 90 degrees on a curved metal base, to the fashion follower's Bouclé Hat (£9), a smart, black astrakhan-look pillbox hat, and matching gloves (£7).

Boots's Fine Fragrance sets for men and women (£10), each with five eau de toilette miniatures from designers such as Nina Ricci and Hugo Boss, are good value. The steel test-tube style Bath Essence Rack (£7), with four aromatherapy bath essences (25ml each), offers seasonal pampering and the company's Royale Jewel Egg Soap (£3), concealing a gold-plated charm, is prettily packaged in Fabergé style. For a couple, choose a pair of tartan espresso cups and saucers in a gift pack (£10), and for a sports fan the Sports Radio Cap (£10, with FM/AM mono reception, aerial, earphones and batteries).

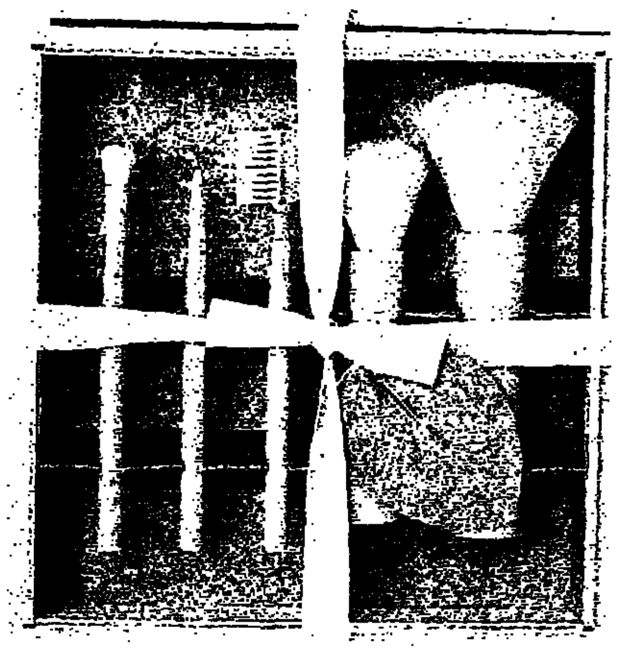
Paperchase is packed with well-priced goodies. Any listmaker would appreciate a shorthand-sized notepad with an embossed copper or silver front (£7), or a suede mini-Post-it holder (various bright colours £3.75). Or go for the store's credit card-sized metal Lexon calculator (£6.99) or the tiny, teardrop-shaped metal Lexon Spark Micro Knife (£7.99). The ecologically sound will love the driftwood look of the free-standing, recycled wooden photo frames, made from weathered planks with one (£5.50) or two (£7.50) 3½in x 5in clipframes mounted on them. There is also a pretty wooden crate containing six guest soaps (£9.99). Compact Desk Calendars feature artists from Monet to Mapplethorpe (£3.99). My favourite Paperchase present is The Original Tin Kazoo (£3.99), made from a recently found tooling of an original 1930s kazoo known as Gold Tap.

Muji is the shop for unfussy accessories and tokens for the design conscious. Choose a slim, brushed aluminium card case (£4.99) for the minimalist executive; or a brushed aluminium pen and pencil tube (£3.95) with a matching ballpoint pen (£3.95), a clear acrylic propelling pencil (95p) and a clear fibre-tip pen (75p). Men's cotton-ribbed vests (£8.75) in black, white or grey will bring a touch of the Bruce Willises to the most conservative wardrobe. The high-cut cotton knickers for women (pack of three, black, white and grey, £9.50) are great value. Smart women will also appreciate the brushed aluminium-trimmed make-up brushes (£2.50 to £5.75).

DENCIL MCNEELANCE



Leather-bound miniature poetry selection, £7.95, and folding frame, £6.95, from John Lewis



Make-up brushes in a wooden crate, £10, from M&S

Past Times is known for reproduction period presents. Get a set of six sterling silver Christmas pudding charms (£9.95) for a family that enjoys traditional festivities; a box of six terracotta pots with scented candles (three lavender, three sandalwood, £9.95), for friends who like fragrant presents but not frilly ones; a white T-shirt (£8.95) emblazoned with "Libens, volens, potens" (ready, willing, able) for the one who always ends up doing the odd jobs, or Medieval Initial Paper, with an initial of your choice reproduced from an early edition of *Le Romant de la Rose* (eight sheets and envelopes £4.95), for the recalcitrant thank-you letter writer.

If you're staying with friends, consider taking them a Tudor-inspired 4in-square hanging plaque, also in terracotta, engraved with "Plenty & Grace be to this place" (£9.95) as your bread-and-butter present. Give the accomplished needlewoman a Victorian-style pewter egg pincushion (£7.50), the gardener a 1¼in tall pewter Robin Redbreast Pillbox (£7.95), topped with a robin standing on a flowerpot; and the old salt a 4in diameter hardwood box with a beautifully detailed fully-rigged ship painted on glass on its lid (£9.95).

Try The Pier for presents for first-homers and a fine range of candles and holders. A candle with a gold cherub leaning on a pillar (£1.50) is suitably festive and the Christmas Candlelight Projector (white or blue, from £9.95) is lovely — the opaque glass jar contains a suspended night-light holder with star shapes cut out of it, that moves and projects star shapes on to walls and ceiling. Get the Church Candle with Iron Saucer (£9.95, 12cm x 8cm) for intimate dinners and "gold leafed" wooden apples and pears (£1.99 each) for friends with baroque leanings.

Marks & Spencer has a rugged-looking brown leather credit card holder (£10) and key case (£10), or a stainless steel 14-function pocket knife (£7). There is also a wide selection of silk ties at £10, with designs from safe polka-dots to more dramatic goldfish — and he might even be persuaded to wear the Christmas silk tie with reindeer (£10).

For her, choose satin camisoles in black (with a rope design neck and straps) or cream (lattice neckline and straps), at £9 each; a glass jar of scented rose petals (£7); or a set of wooden handled make-up brushes in a small wooden crate (£10). Also look at the pewter hip flask (£9), black packaged travel shoe kit (£10) and Oil and Vinegar Selection rack, with 50ml each of extra virgin olive oil, red wine vinegar and balsamic vinegar in a wire holder (£7).

The department stores have some great inexpensive presents this year, Debenhams being particularly good for feminine gifts, with elegant multi-row glass bead necklaces at £6 and matching earrings at £4 in many colours; thermal gloves with faux leopardskin cuffs (£7); supersoft scarves in many colours (£6); and ultra chic brass and "jewel" napkin rings (£1.50 each) — a set of six costs less than a tenner. At House of Fraser, get him some glamorous Hue socks in matt gold or silver or slightly shimmery black, a bargain beautifully boxed at £5; or wine cork cufflinks (£9.99); and her, a velvet drawstring evening bag in burgundy or black (£9.99) or a raw silk zipped make-up pouch in imperial purple (£6).

At John Lewis, the leather-bound miniature selection from Keats, Wordsworth and Shakespeare will please a poetry lover (£7.95); or, for a traveller, the miniature folding frame in black leather (£6.95). Then go to BhS and choose "gold" sponged glass goblets (£4), a black car memo pad (£5) with spectacles clip, a chrome spectacles case (£10) for shortsighted chic, a Merry Christmas Coronation Street T-shirt (£10) showing Stan, Hilda and Eddie looking incredibly glum for the "bah, humbug" merchant; and chocolate body paint (400g, £3) with brush.

STEPHANIE LEWIS

Where to buy

☐ BhS, Boots, Debenhams, House of Fraser and Marks & Spencer — branches nationwide

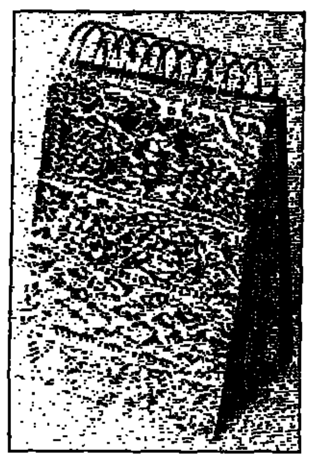
☐ John Lewis: 0171-629 7711 for branches.

☐ Muji: 0171-494 1197 for branches.

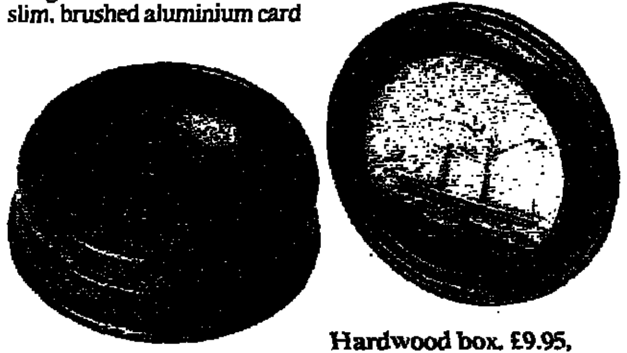
☐ Paperchase: 0171-580 8496 for branches.

☐ Past Times: 01993 776999 for branches.

☐ The Pier: 01235 821088 for branches.



Pad, £7, from Paperchase



Hardwood box, £9.95, from Past Times

Add the finishing touches to that party outfit with this elegant, multi-row glass bead necklace, £6; matching earrings, £4. Available at Debenhams stores in a wide variety of colours

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From boomerangs to a biker's jacket, somewhere lies the perfect present for your pet

Ruff guide to Xmas

JUST because your terrier doesn't start dropping hints in mid-November that he really could use a new food bowl, or your tabby doesn't leave *Vanity Fair* lying open at the colour spread advertising the latest Tiffany cat collar, it doesn't mean that they don't know Christmas is coming.

They may even turn out to be the only ones who appreciate what you have bought them. And they will certainly be the only ones whose size you have guessed correctly.

Long gone are the days when those who bought pet presents were seen to be eccentrics with little else to do with their money. British pet owners now spend time and effort choosing a suitable gift for Fido or Felix.

Armitage Bros of Nottingham, manufacturers of pet toys, says its research indicates that 65 per cent of dog owners put something under the tree for their pets, while for cat owners the figure, although increasing, is 44 per cent. As owners are not content with merely treating their pets to a few chocolates, manufacturers are turning their hand to producing unusual Christmas items. These range from special Harrods' T-shirts for dogs, from £9, to its luxury fake-fur-lined beds for fat cats, costing £65.

But a pet stocking or stocking filler needn't break the bank. Presents can start from as little as 99p for a mini dog bag (Special Friends by Pedigree), containing a few chocolate drops and beef treats, and rise to £140 for a smart pinewood indoor kennel with a yellow gable made by Polleycraft.

Armitage, which makes Good Girl and Good Boy choc drops, has stockings for £3.99 containing a red and green squeaky toy for dogs and, for cats, a ball or a mouse. Both stockings have a variety of edible treats, from chicken snacks to cheese bits.

Good Boy Jolly Drops (89p) and Good Girl Cat Treats (95p) are designed to hang on your Christmas tree and come in a conifer-shaped box.

Philippa Cornwell, product manager at Armitage, which offers 38 Christmas products from a squeaky red cracker (£2.99) to a cucumber dog shampoo £1.95) and shocking pink and white dog and cat collars with green Christmas trees printed on them (£3.49 for dogs, £2.50 for cats, including a tiny bell), explains that the "British nation is dotty about pets and reacts by giving gifts at Christmas. Pet owners take it very seriously."

Lara Ignatieff, a Harrods buyer, says many animal owners opt for a package of products during the holiday season. Typically, this includes festive collars (£2.50-£27), waterproof coats (from £6.50-£70), place mats (£2.50-£16.25) and toys (from a ball for £1.50 to a rubber squeaky snowman for £7).

Harrods' holiday T-shirts, this year with slogans "Wreck the Hall and Eat the Holly" and "Oh Come, Sit, Stay, all ye Faithful" at £13.50 each, are always popular. Among my favourite items are the Bones Away flying jacket for inclement weather (£34) and the leather Bad to the Bone bikers' lookalike jacket (£42).

While ordinary families load their plates with turkey trimmings, this year Spillers Foods has made sure that cats aren't left out by introducing Flexi Chunks in jelly with turkey and stuffing. And if your cat has gourmet tastes, there's game and chicken, trout and salmon and beef and kidney.

Although Spillers has produced two 1996 cat calendars (Felix and Arthur's at £2.99) the company decided not to do one for dogs. Instead it has decorated its Bonio dog biscuit box with a bloodhound in a Santa hat surrounded by holly (£1.09).

While most Christmas treats for animals can be bought at your local supermarket or favourite pet store, there are several mail order firms, such as Pet Necessities, based in Ossett, West Yorkshire, which supplies an interesting array of toys. The Cheese Tease (£4.99), a cardboard toy looking like a wedge of cheese with a ball inside it, and Rita Rat, a combination of toy and scratching post (£6.99), designed to save wear and tear on your sofa, are two popular items.

More pricey at £29.99 is the Cat Activity Centre for climbing and perching (36in high). For dogs, there is The Kong (£2.99 to £9.99 depending on size) available in red and black rubber. It is meant to take the boredom out of walks in the park and has a wild, unpredictable bounce when thrown. And as an ideal stocking filler, for £3.45 there's the Retriever boomerang — a toy designed to come back if your dog can't be bothered to fetch it.

One word of advice this Christmas — don't leave Fido or Felix out in the cold. A little consideration could go a long way to providing a stress-free holiday for your pets.

MICHAEL KALLENBACH

ADRIAN BROOKES

Cool canines: leather jackets and cap, all from Harrods

Fact file

☐ National Cat Show, today (December 9), Olympia, Earls Court.

☐ Armitage Bros, Mile End Road, Colwick, Nottingham NG4 2BA (0115-961 4984 for stockists).

☐ Harrods, Knightsbridge, London SW1 (0171-730 1234).

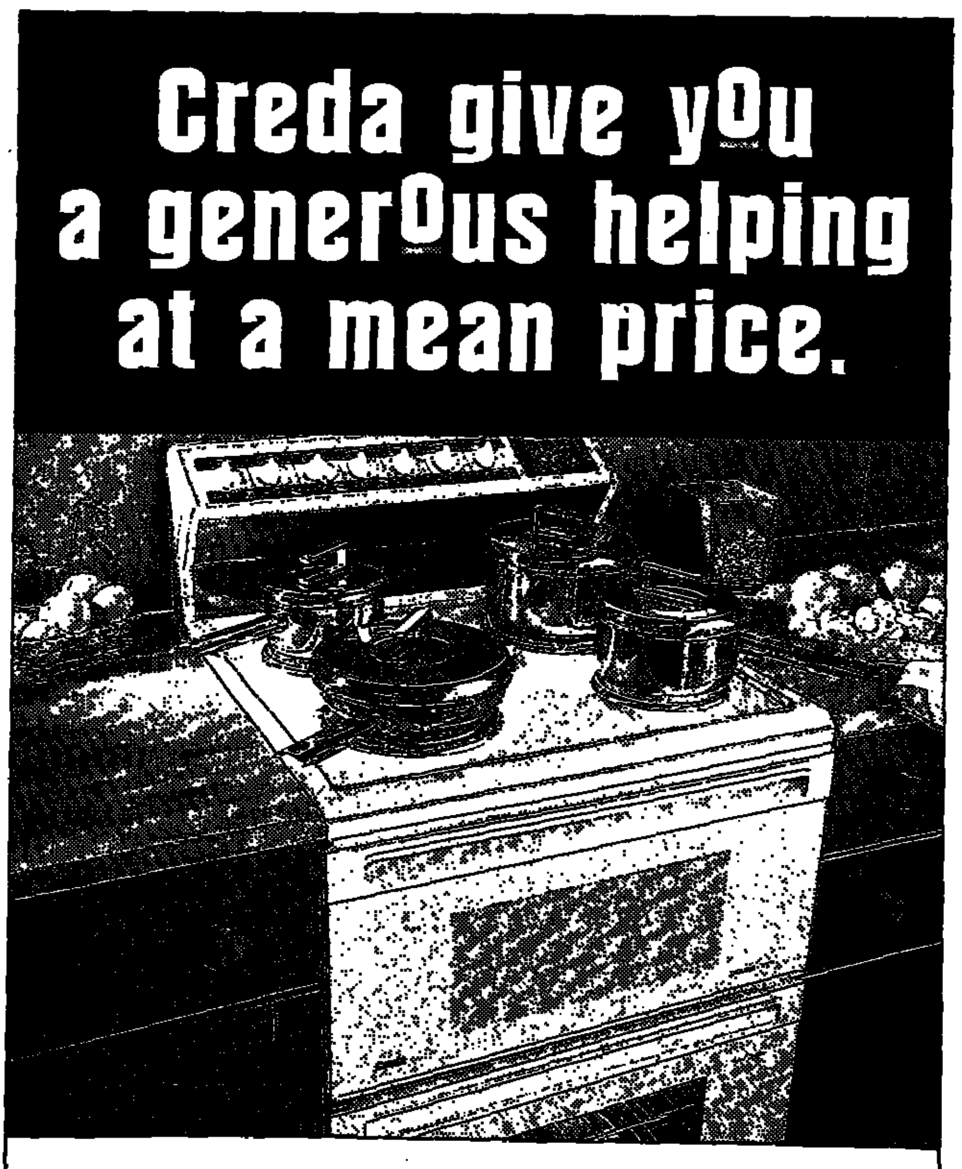
☐ Pedigree Petfoods. Freephone for advice on products, 0800 738 800

☐ Pet Necessities, PO Box 34, Ossett, West Yorkshire WF4 0XF (Freephone 0500 012013).

☐ Polleycraft Hillview Workshops, West Bagborough, Somerset TA4 3EW (01823 433375).

☐ Spillers Petfoods. Careline freephone, 0800 7382273.

Win a cat calendar, page 8



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CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY EVENTS: From carol concerts to puppet shows, theatre workshops and wildlife . . .

In search of festive cheer

LONDON

Christmas Pudding Race: Runners in fancy dress negotiate strange obstacles while carrying Christmas puddings.
Covent Garden Piazza, WC2. Today from 10.30am, race starts at 11.45am. Free.

Olympia International Showjumping Championships: Top showjumping and animal events — traditional Christmas entertainment for horsey types.
Olympia, Hammersmith Road, W14 (0171-373 3113). Dec 14-18, 1.30pm, 7pm. Tickets from £9. ♿

Santa Clues Quiz: Find details in the paintings to make up a suitably festive scene; pick up the clues from the information desk (until Jan 6).
Also **A Very Big Thing:** A pantomime which is part of the National Trust Centenary, the three founders of the trust set off in hot pursuit of a villainous factory owner. Dec 19-22, 27-30, 11.30am and 2.30pm.
National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, WC2 (0171-839 3321). Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Wed until 8pm, Sun 2pm-6pm. Closed Dec 24-26, Jan 1. Free. ♿

Danger Mouse and Friends: Exhibition featuring Count Duckula, Noddy, the BFG, Oakie Doke and Fantomcat created by Cosgrove Hall. Enjoy the interactive exhibits or take a masterclass.
National Theatre, SE1 (0171-928 2252). Today-Feb 3, Open Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm. Free. Closed Dec 23-25. ♿

Christmas at the V&A: Try your hand at Rangoli — floor painting with coloured powder and rice flour, as well as scroll-painting and jewellery making (Dec 15-17, 21, 22, 29-31, Jan 5-7 at 11am, 12, 1pm and 2pm).
There are also introductory tours for children (age 6-11 years, Dec 19-22 at 11.30 and 2.30pm) and Jain hymns, dance and storytelling (Dec 19, 20, 27, 28, Jan 3 and 4 from 11am-3.30pm).
Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, SW7 (0171-938 8638). Tues-Sun, 10am-5.50pm, Mon, 12-5.50pm. Closed Dec 24-26. Free. ♿

Barbican Children's Events
Teddy Bears' Concerts: Today at 3.30pm and Dec 27 at 3pm. Tickets from £8.80 (bring a bear).
Making Stained Glass Windows: Today, 11am-12. Materials provided. Free.
The Mad Hatter's Christmas Concert: Meet Alice and her friends before the concert. Dec 23, 3pm. Tickets from £9.50.
Barbican Centre, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-638 8891). ♿

Christmas Past: Period rooms sparkle with traditional festive decorations from the past 400 years with storytelling (Dec 13, 14, 6.30pm, adults £3.50, children £1).
After Christmas enjoy **Farewell to Christmas** when they burn the holly and the ivy with carol singing and Twelfth Night cake (Jan 6, 4pm, free).
Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, E2 (0171-739 9893). Open Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2pm-5pm. Free. ♿

Exhibition of Puppets: All sorts of puppets and marionettes and the chance to try your hand at working a puppet.
Puppet Shows of Three Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales. Today, tomorrow, Dec 16 and 17 at 2pm and 3pm. Free. ♿
Gabriel's Wharf, 56 Upper Ground, South Bank, SE1 (0171-620 0544). Exhibition open Tues-Sun, 12-6pm (Wed until 8pm) to Dec 20. Free. ♿

London Zoo: A special performance of the Living Nativity with starring roles for Nina the camel, live sheep, goats and Tutti Frutti the donkey. Room on stage for spectators (Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 23, 2pm). Plus Santa in his Grotto and Chrissie the Reindeer (same days as above, 11-4pm).
London Zoo, Regent's Park, NW1. Book in advance on 0171-586 3910. Christmas activities. £10, children £8. Normal admission £7, children £5. Open daily 10am-4pm. Closed Dec 25. ♿

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The superheroes come to Wembley, as parents will doubtless be told.
Wembley Arena, Wembley (0181-900 1234). Jan 1-3. Mon, 6pm, Tues, 2.30pm and 7.30pm and Wed, 2.30pm. From £10, children from £7.50. ♿

Nutcracker on Ice: The traditional ballet on ice.
London Arena, Limeharbour, E14 (0171-538 1212). Jan 5 and 6, 7.30pm. From £10. ♿

Tales of Beatrix Potter: Ballet based on the film version of the classic children's stories.
Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2 (0171-304 4000). Dec 21-Jan 6 (excluding Dec 25 and certain other days). From £11.50. ♿

The Wind in the Willows: Alan Bennett's popular adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's story.
Old Vic Theatre, Waterloo Road, SE1 (0171-928 6655). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, Wed, Sat 2.30pm. Dec 26, 28, 29, 2.30pm. Closed Dec 24, 25. Booking to Feb 24. £6.75 upwards. ♿

Cinderella: London City Ballet's romantic production, bringing a touch of pantomime with a role for Buttons.
Sadlers Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, EC1 (0171-278 8916). Dec 16-Jan 6, 7.30pm, matinees Dec 16, 20, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, Jan 6, 2.30pm. From £5. ♿

BEDFORDSHIRE

Winter safari: Visit Santa's Grotto and see the animals.
Woburn Safari Park, Woburn (01525 290407). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 11am-3pm. £5, children £4, under-threes free.

CORNWALL

Christmas Pageant: Nativity characters, Cornish and other saints process through the town with a donkey, a lamb and two bands, followed by carol singing.
Town Centre, Lostwithiel (01208 872207). Dec 14, from 6.30pm. Free.

DEVON

Tree trip: Travel through the wild woods and meet Father Christmas in his grotto (11am-noon, 2-3pm, 50p) or get Crealy the Christmas Bear to help you make your own personal Christmas cards (3pm).
Crealy Park, Clyst St Mary, Exeter (01395 233200). Tomorrow, and Dec 16-23. Open daily 10.30am-5pm. Closed Dec 24-26. £3.45, children £2.75, under-threes free.

Puppet Show: Presented by Jacolly Puppets (tomorrow, 2pm, 2.45 and 3.30pm) or meet Father Christmas (Dec 17, 2-4pm, free gift for under-sevens).
Buckland Abbey, Yelverton, Plymouth (01822 853607). Free. Open Sat, Sun only, 2-5pm. Closed Dec 23, 24.

DURHAM

Hall Hill Farm: Visit Santa and see the animals in their winter stables.
Hall Hill Farm, Lanchester (01388 730300). Tomorrow, Dec 17, 11am-4pm. £2.75, children. £1.50. ♿

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Christmas at Clearwell Caves: Follow the story of the brightest star as you walk through the caves and meet Santa.
Clearwell Caves, Clearwell, Coleford (01594 832535). Today-Dec 24, Dec 27, Jan 1. Open Sat, Sun, 10am-5pm, Mon-Fri, 2-6pm, Dec 16-24, daily 10am-5pm. £3, includes a present for under-14s. ♿

GREATER MANCHESTER

Heavenly scent: The magic and mystery of perfume — follow the smelly trail by sniffing out the seasonal hidden aromas. For a Christmas present you could make a scented gift to take home (today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 10.30am-12 and 1.30-3pm).
Museum of Science and Industry, Liverpool Road, Castlefield, Manchester (0161-832 2244). £4, children £2, under-fives free. Open daily 10am-5pm (except Dec 24-26). ♿

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

Christmas Festivities: Christmas celebrations with seasonal food, singing and puppets. Meet Father Christmas (£1.50 per child).
Hereford & Worcester County Museum, Harlebury (01299 250416). Tomorrow, Dec 17, 1pm-4.30pm. Free. ♿

ISLE OF WIGHT

Carol Concert: With Santa Claus and a morning of competitions and games.
The Needles Old Battery, West Highdown, Totland Bay (01983 754772). Dec 15, 10am. Free.

KENT

Christmas at the Castle: The castle is decorated with garlands and bows and huge Christmas trees, plus choirs at lunchtime. Meet Father Christmas handing out presents.
Leeds Castle, Leeds (01622 765400). Until Dec 24, open 10am-3pm. Gardens £5.50, children £3.50, family £16; castle and gardens £7.50, children £5, family £21. Closed Dec 25. ♿

LANCASHIRE

Santa's Grotto: Meet Santa and his real reindeer (presents £1).
Blackpool Zoo Park, East Park Drive, Blackpool (01253 765027). Until Dec 24. 10.30am-3.30pm. £2, children £1, under-threes free, family £4.75. ♿

Green Christmas: Make "green" cards, decorations and presents from other people's rubbish.
Hollingworth Lake Country Park Visitor Centre, Rakewood Road, Littleborough (01706 373421). Dec 16, 2pm. Age seven upwards. Free. ♿

MERSEYSIDE

Watch Out, Watch Out: There's a smuggler about. Rummage for contraband and listen to stories. Also Christmas in the Paymaster's House — experience Christmas as it was 100 years ago (Dec 17, 29, 30, 2-5pm).
Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool (0151-478 4499). Daily 10.30am-5.30pm. £3, children £1.50. Closed Dec 24-26, Jan 1. ♿

Christmas Pudding Stir Up: Help Mrs Sykes, a Victorian cook, to make her giant plum pudding.
Speke Hall, The Walk, Liverpool (0151-427 7231). Dec 16, 1.30pm-4pm. £3.60, children £1.80, under-fives free. (Hall then closed until March 30.)

NORFOLK

Father Christmas visits the Hall: Join hundreds of others for carols outside the floodlit hall. Father Christmas distributes gifts during the singing.
Blickling Hall, Blickling, Norwich (01263 733084). Dec 21, 6.30pm. Free. ♿

Visit Santa's Grotto: See him feed his deer at 11am each morning.
Banham Zoo, The Grove, Banham (01953 887771). Until Dec 24, Mon-Fri 10am-3.30pm; Sat, Sun 11am-3.30pm. £4.50, children £2.95. Closed Dec 25, 26. ♿

OXFORDSHIRE

Tudor Christmas Experience: The manor house is decorated as it would have been in Tudor times.
Sulgrave Manor, Sulgrave, Banbury (01295 760205). Until

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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

هكذا من الأصل

… there is something for all the family in this nationwide guide to what's on and where. By **Heather Alston**

Dec 31. £3.50, children £1.75. Open weekends and Dec 27-31, 10.30am-1pm and 2-4.30pm.

STAFFORDSHIRE

The Stolen Jewels: A magical mix of actors, masks, shadows, puppets and music.
Moseley Old Hall, Moseley Old Hall Lane, Fordhouses, Wolverhampton (01902 782808). Dec 15, 8pm, Dec 16, 2pm and 4.30pm. £5, children £3. ♿

Jungle Book: Snap Theatre Company's production based on Rudyard Kipling's stories.
Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent (01283 567720). Dec 27-30, 7.30pm, £5.50, children £4.50. Dec 28, 30, 2pm, £4.50, children £3.50. ♿

SUSSEX

Drusillas Park: In the Christmas Village, Santa's elves will help you to make presents and cards. Plus a train ride with the reindeer outriders to Santa's Roof Top World (Dec 9, 10, 16-23, 11am-4pm, £4.25, children £3.50, under-threes £1). And sing carols to the animals on Dec 13, 14, (4.30pm) 17 (7pm) and 18 (3pm).
Drusillas Park, Alfriston, East Sussex (01323 870656). Open daily 10am-5pm (except Dec 24-26). £3.35, children £2.50, under-threes free. ♿

Christmas Cracker Hunt: Help Father Christmas to find and sort out his crackers which have been mislaid around the castle.
Bodiam Castle, Robertsbridge (01580 830436). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 10.30am-12.30pm, 1.30pm-3.30pm. Open Tues-Sun 10am-dusk. Closed Dec 24-26, and Jan 2 for six weeks. £2.50, children £1.30, cracker hunt £2. ♿

Meet Father Christmas: Professional entertainer comes to Petworth and tells stories and plays games.
Petworth House, Petworth (01798 342207). Today, tomorrow, 12.30pm-4pm. Free. ♿

TYNE AND WEAR

Christmas Family Day: Make cards for your friends, crowns for your head, Chinese triangles, jumping jacks and other tree decorations. Refreshments are available.
Shipley Art Gallery, Prince Consort Road, Gateshead (0191-477 1495). Dec 16, 10.30am-3.30pm. Open Tues-Fri, 10am-5.30pm, Sat 10am-4.30pm. Sun, 2pm-5pm. Free. ♿

Recycled Christmas: Make your own decorations using rubbish.
Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne (0191-222 7418). Today, 10.30am-4.30pm. Open Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun 2pm-5pm. £3, children £2, family £10, except Dec 25, 26, 27 and Jan 1. No charge for activity. ♿

Christmas Family Fun: Make your own special cards and decorations.
South Shields Museum and Art Gallery, Ocean Road, South Shields (0191-456 8740). Dec 16, 10am-12 and 1pm-3pm. Museum open Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm. Free. ♿

YORKSHIRE

Tales Around the Fireside: (Dec 17, 1-4pm, free) and the chance to meet Santa (today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 1-4pm, £1 per child).
East Riddlesden Hall, Bradford Road, Keighley (01535 607075). Shop open. Sat, Sun, 12-4.30pm. House closed except for special events. ♿

A Country House at Christmas: Period costumes, music and Father Christmas.
Nostell Priory, Doncaster Road, Nostell, Wakefield. 01924 863892. Today, tomorrow, 2-6pm. £3.50, children £1.80. Property closed except for special events. ♿

Visit Santa's Grotto: Meet his elf, find Rudolf's missing red nose and win a prize (Dec 20-23). Also **Big Fibs and Tall Stories:** find out from the mad professor the real truth behind modern myths (today, tomorrow, Dec 16-23, Dec 27-Jan 7, throughout the day).
Eureka! The Museum for Children, Discovery Road, Halifax (01422 330069). Open daily 10am-5pm. £4.50, children £3.50, family £14.50, under-threes free. Closed Dec 24-26.

Father Christmas Underground: Surface entertainments with magic and puppets and the chance to meet Father Christmas 450ft underground.
National Coal Mining Museum of England, Caphouse Colliery, New Road, Overton, Wakefield (01924 848806). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 23, 11am-4pm. Tour: £5.60, children £4.15 (under-12s get a free present); under-fives meet Father Christmas for £1.50. Open daily 10am-5pm. Closed Dec 24-26 and Jan 1. ♿

Family Funday Concert: Hear the music of the Chinese harp played by Zi Lan Liao.
Under the Clock Tower, Kingswood Suite, Town Hall, Wood Street, Wakefield (01924 295121). Tomorrow, 11am. £4, children £2. ♿

Family Funday Concert: Celtarabia perform Arabian/ European medieval music. Plus a hurdy gurdy.
Chapel Studio, College of Ripon and York St John, Lord Mayors Walk, York (01904 623568). Tomorrow, 11am. £3.50, children £1.50, family £8. ♿

All-day birthday party: With clowns and games to celebrate 21 years of the museum.
Bradford Industrial and Horses at Work Museum, Moorside Mills, Moorside Road, Bradford (01274 631756). Dec 16, 10am-4pm. Free. Open Tues-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun, 12-5pm. Closed Dec 25, 26. ♿

SCOTLAND

Christmas Robin Weekend: Bird crafts, face painting and festive food for birds.
RSPB Vane Farm Reserve, Loch Leven, Kinross, Tayside (01577 862355). Dec 16, 17, 12-4pm. Free (some charges for use of materials). ♿

Meet Santa: See the reindeer at Camperdown Wildlife Centre. Plus competitions.
Camperdown Wildlife Centre, Camperdown Country Park, Dundee (01382 432689). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 12-5pm. £1.30, children 95p. Open daily 10am-2.45pm. ♿

Family Christmas Concert: Mozart's Musical Sleigh Ride and Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf.*
City Hall, St John's Place, Perth (01738 621031). Dec 21, 7.30pm. Tickets from £6.50. ♿

The Happy Gang and the Magic Snowman: Seasonal singalong adventure for under-eights.
Mitchell Theatre, Granville Street, Glasgow (0141-227 5511). Dec 16, 1.30pm. Tickets from £3. ♿ *Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh (0131-220 4349). Dec 18, 1.30pm and 6.30pm. Tickets £3.*

Carol Party: Music, clowns and lots of singing plus a few surprises.
Usher Hall, Edinburgh (0131-228 1155). Dec 21, 7.30pm. Tickets from £6. ♿

Hot Air Balloons: Watch them sail over Edinburgh. A spectacular sight.
Arthur's Seat, Queen's Park, Edinburgh (0131-557 3990). Jan 1, from 1pm.

Absolutely Fabulous Fashion: Exhibition of inventions from the Industrial Revolution to the fibres of the future. Also includes the exhibition Celebrations and Pantomime. Plus all sorts of special Christmas activities (today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17).
Scotland Street School Museum of Education, 225 Scotland Street, Glasgow (0141-429 1202). Until Jan 7. Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun, 2pm-5pm, except Dec 25, 26 and Jan 1, 2. Free. ♿

The Singing Kettle Christmas Party: Join in the games, songs and lots more. For under-eights.
Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC), Finnieston Street, Glasgow (0141-227 5511). Dec 13-Jan 4 (except Dec 25). 10am or 11am and 1pm or 2pm. Tickets from £4. ♿

Tall Tales for Cold Nights: Based on traditional tales of beautiful swans, changelings, spell-casting and spell-breaking originating from Scotland's travellers.
Tron Theatre, 63 Trongate, Glasgow (0141-227 5511). Dec 19-21, 7.30pm. Tickets £7.50. ♿

NORTHERN IRELAND

Cinemagic International Film Festival: children's film festival with masterclasses in directing, production, acting and special screenings. Including the Young Film Critic competition. Films being shown from all over the world and next year's new films including Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess* and *Indian in the Cupboard*, based on Lynne Reid Banks's story.
Cinemagic, MGM Cinema, Dublin Road, Belfast (01232 550088/9 for details). Until Dec 16.

Minimagic: One-day screenings of the films shown in the main festival.
Antrim Cineplex, Fountain Lane, Antrim. Dec 11. Armagh City Film House, Market Street, Armagh. Dec 13. Savoy Cinema, Merchants Quay, Newry, Dec 15. Box office 01232 550088/9. £2, 18 years and under £1.50.

WALES

Choc Shop: Make your own chocolates for presents.
Model House Craft and Design Centre, Bull Ring, Llantrisant, Mid Glamorgan (01443 237758). Dec 16, 17, 10.30am-12.30pm and 2-3.30pm, £3 a session. Open Tues-Sun 10am-5pm. Free. Closed Dec 22-Jan 2. ♿

Have breakfast or tea with Santa: See Santa arrive on his sleigh, have a meal and then enjoy the fun and step on to the stage for your present.
Dyffryn House and Gardens, St Nicholas, Cardiff (01222 593328). Today and Dec 16, 9.30am and 1.30pm (please book). Tickets £7 per child. ♿

Make your own crackers: tomorrow, 1-4pm (small charge for materials) or enjoy storytelling for all the family (Dec 19, 7.30pm, £1, children 75p, please book).
Nant Mill Visitor Centre, Nant Road, Coedpoeth, Wrexham, Clwyd (01978 752772). Open Sat, Sun only, 10am-4.30pm. Free. Closed Dec 24. ♿

Prepare for Christmas: Make candles and cards, pin cushions, pictures and other presents.
Ty Mawr Country Park, Cae Gwilym Lane, Cefn Mawr, Wrexham, Clwyd (01978 822780). Tomorrow and Dec 17, 2pm-4pm. Cost 20p. ♿

Christmas Celebrations: Enjoy the school choir, a brass band, festive food and hot chestnuts. Meet Santa Claus underground in the grotto.
Rhondda Heritage Park, Lewis Merthyr Colliery, Coed Cae Road, Trehafod, Mid Glamorgan (01443 682036). Today, tomorrow, 10am-6pm, special price £2.50 for all visitors. Open Tues-Sun 10am-6pm, except Dec 25, 26. £4.95, children £4.25. ♿

Christmas past: A walk through history with celebrations from many different eras.
Llancaiach Fawr Living History Museum, Nelson, Treharris, Mid Glamorgan (01443 412248). Dec 12-20, tours 7pm, 7.30pm, 8pm. £5 (includes a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie).

Santa's Soft Play Grotto: Visit Santa and play on inflatable toys.
Pentwyn Leisure Centre, Bryn Celyn Road, Pentwyn, Cardiff (01222 549211). Dec 13-15, 2-4pm, £2.50. ♿

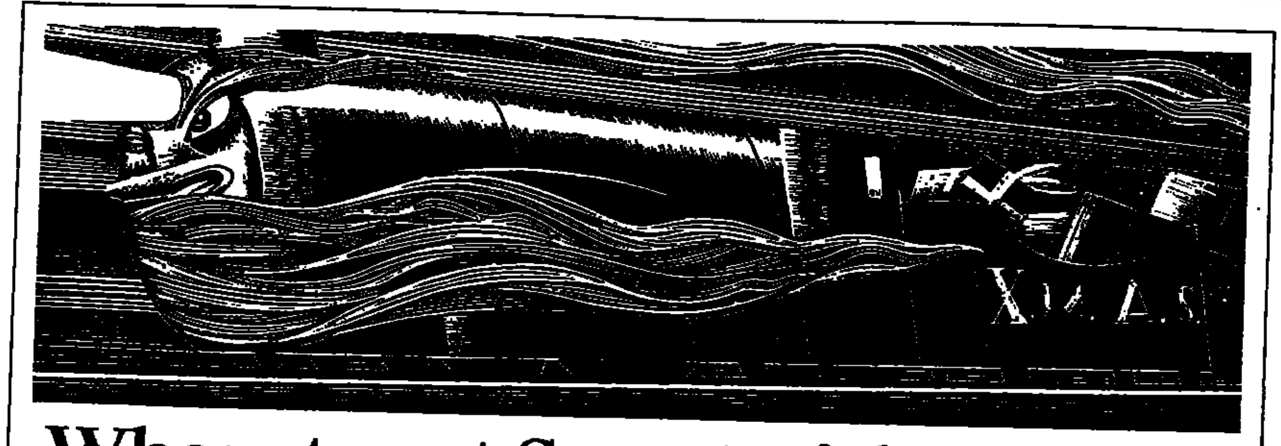
Celebration of Christmas: Bell ringers, storytellers, carol singers and competitions. Plus Victorian games and puzzles.
Bodelwyddan Castle, Bodelwyddan, Clwyd (01745 584060). Dec 14, from 6.30pm. £1.50, children 50p (free with accompanying adult). ♿

Meet Father Christmas: Visit him in his workshop. Plus the exhibition *The Ghost of Christmas Past* showing Victorian rooms at Christmas time.
Bersham Heritage Centre, Bersham, Near Wrexham, Clwyd. 01978 261529. Dec 16, 1pm-4pm. Small charge for present. ♿

Recycled Christmas: Make your own "green" tree and table decorations.
Alyn Waters Country Park, Parkwell Road, Gwersyllt, Wrexham (01978 720996). Dec 17, 2-4pm. Free

Red Kite Feeding: The wild birds, normally about 20, arrive to be fed everyday. There is also a farm trail.
Gigrin Farm, South Road, Rhayader, Powys (01597 810243). Daily 2pm. £2, children 50p.

● *More events for the period between Christmas and New Year will appear in the December 23 issue of Weekend.*



Where to get Santa's ticket to ride

Nene Valley Railway
Wansford Station, Stibbington, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (01780 782854). Today, tomorrow, Dec 13, 16, 17, 20, 22-24, 9am-4pm. £7, under-threes £3.50.

South Tynedale Railway
Alston, Cumbria (01434 381696). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 23, 24, 11am-3pm. £3, children £2.

Midland Railway Centre
Butterley Station, Ripley, Derbyshire (01773 747674). Today, tomorrow, Dec 14, 16, 17, 19-24, 11am-3.40pm. £6.95, under-threes £3.95. ♿

National Tramway Museum
Crich, Derbyshire (01773 852565). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 10.30am-4.30pm. £6. ♿

Swanage Railway
Station House, Swanage, Dorset (01929 425800). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 21-24, 9.30am-6pm. Please book. From £5. ♿

Mid-Hants Railway
Alresford Station, Alresford (01962 733810). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 20-24, 10am-4pm. Please book. £6.50.

Severn Valley Railway
The Railway Station, Kidderminster, Hereford and Worcester (01299 403816). Today, tomorrow, and Dec 16, 17, 23, 24, 9.45am-3.45pm. £6. ♿

North Yorkshire Moors Railway
Pickering Station, Pickering (01751 472508). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 23. £5.90.

Heatherslaw Light Railway
Ford Forge, Heatherslaw, Cornhill-on-Tweed, Northumberland (01890 820244). £6. Dec 16, 17, 22, 23. Please book, various times. ♿

Didcot Railway Centre
Didcot, Oxon (01235 817200). Tomorrow, Dec 17, 23, 24, 11am-4pm. £5. ♿

Embsay Steam Railway
Embsay Station, Embsay, North Yorkshire (01756 794727). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 24. 10.30am-3.30pm. £3.50, child £4.50. ♿

Murton Park
Murton, York (01904 489966). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 23, 24. 10am-3pm. £2.50. ♿

Travel from Belfast to Whitehead with Santa
Telephone 01960 353567. Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 11.20am and 2.20pm. £5.50. Please book. ♿

Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway
Bo'ness County Central (0131-441 1374). Today, tomorrow, Dec 16, 17, 23 and 24, 11am-3pm. £4.50, child £4.

Bute Road Station
Bute Road, Cardiff, South Glamorgan (01443 204627). Today, Dec 16, 10.30am-3.15pm. £1, children £2. Please book.

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Cruise to Latin America

Today and every day until the end of December, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* are offering readers the exclusive chance to win one of 80 holidays for two worth more than £150,000 in total. You can also get ten per cent off all the holidays featured in our Around the World adventure.

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Our series of 80 holidays around the world began in Europe, continued to South America with exciting tours of Belize, Chile, Argentina, Peru and Brazil; then to Pakistan, the jungles of India, Sri Lanka and Nepal. There were luxury holidays to resorts in the Caribbean and individually tailored safaris to Africa. There were trips to the Far East and the historically rich Middle East. Last week readers won holidays to North America.

Today we begin a week of luxury cruises to the Caribbean, Bermuda, South America and Alaska, taking in such famous ports as San Juan, Nassau, Guadeloupe, Martinique and New York.

The holidays are organised by Celebrity Cruises, all of whose ships have generously-sized cabins, with televisions and a personal steward. Every evening a programme of the following day's events is delivered to your cabin and there is always a wide choice, from skeet shooting or a bridge tournament, to wine tasting or learning the art of French cooking.

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Spanish colonial fishing port of Cartagena, Colombia

The ships have casinos and discos, swimming pools and health clubs, quiet libraries and a range of sporting activities. Meals are a major part of the enjoyment of any cruise and this week's holidays are no exception with menus created under the direction of some of Europe's leading chefs.

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The Times/Sunday Times Holiday of a Lifetime Competition, Token Request, PO Box 480, London E1 9DN.

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Bookings should be made through Cox & Kings before February 28, 1996. All other terms and conditions relating to these holiday competitions and offers are contained in the brochures.

HOLIDAY PRIZE WINNERS:
The winner of our seven-night holiday to Israel was Ms R Donnelly of Isleworth, Middx; our four-night break to Petra was won by Mr J Ashford of Norwich; the winner of our fly-drive holiday to New England was Mr R Tomlin of Rushden, Northants; the winner of our seven-day trip to Disneyland, including a three-day pass for two to Disneyland, was Mr D Warner of Lancaster; the winner of our trip to Chicago was Ms N Harris of Frodsham, Warrington; and the winner of our seven-night fly-drive holiday to Huntington, California, was Ms A McCormick of Alloa, Clackmannanshire.

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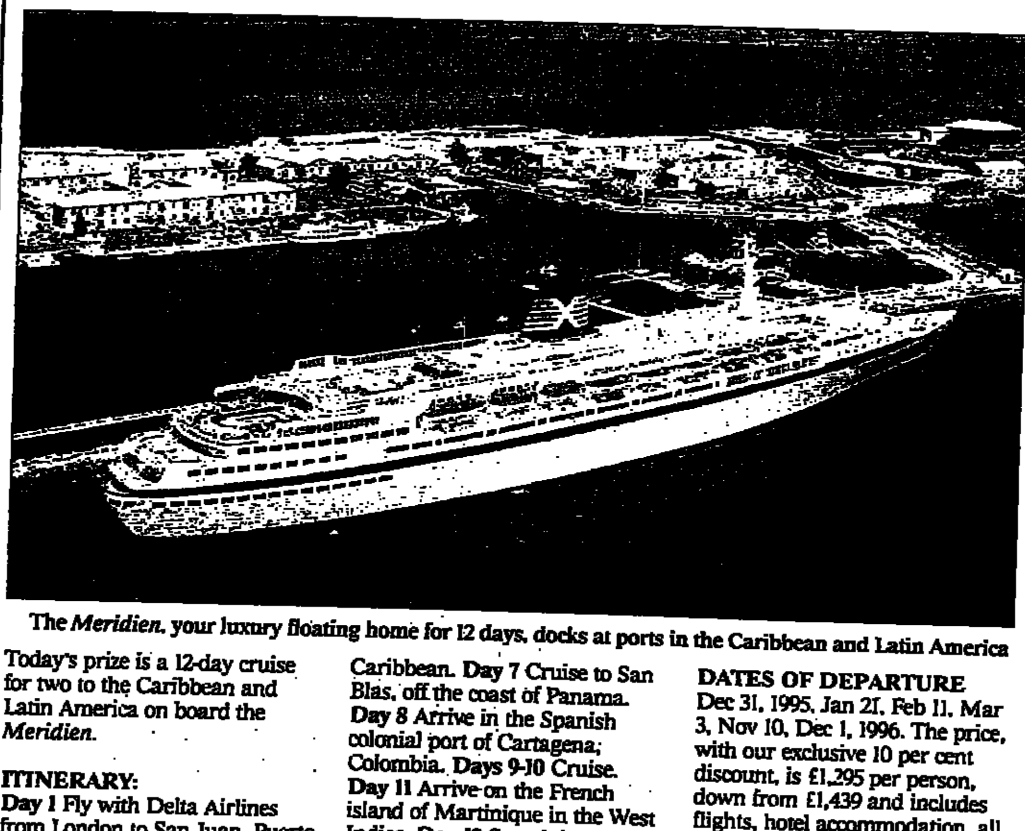
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Day 1 Fly with Delta Airlines from London to San Juan, Puerto Rico, via Atlanta and transfer to your first class hotel overnight. **Day 2** Spend the day in San Juan, exploring the quaint cobblestone old town and the El Morro Fortress. In the evening join the *Meridien*. **Day 3** Cruise **Day 4** Arrive at La Guaira, the port of Caracas, capital of Venezuela. You will have time to explore the bustling city with its mahogany trees, white stucco government buildings and intriguing flea markets. **Day 5** Cruise. **Day 6** Sail into the narrow locks — there are 12 — of the 50-mile long Panama Canal, built by the United States, and finally opened in 1920. The ship turns back half way through the canal and returns to the Caribbean. **Day 7** Cruise to San Blas, off the coast of Panama. **Day 8** Arrive in the Spanish colonial port of Cartagena; Colombia. **Days 9-10** Cruise. **Day 11** Arrive on the French island of Martinique in the West Indies. **Day 12** Spend the day on the islands of St John with its horseshoe-shaped, sand fringed bays and St Thomas with its bustling shops. **Day 13** Cruise to San Juan and disembark. **Day 14** Morning arrival in London.

DATES OF DEPARTURE
Dec 31, 1995, Jan 21, Feb 11, Mar 3, Nov 10, Dec 1, 1996. The price, with our exclusive 10 per cent discount, is £1,295 per person, down from £1,439 and includes flights, hotel accommodation, all meals, entertainment and tips on board, airport and UK departure taxes and transfers. *Times* readers can take advantage of the 10 per cent discount. For more details, please call:
01369 70 77 11

HOW TO ENTER

For your chance to win today's prize, phone your answers to the two questions below on our competition hotline: **0891 40 50 34** before midnight tonight. Calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p at all other times.
The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries received. Normal *Times* Newspapers competition rules apply.

THE QUESTIONS

1. When was the Panama Canal opened?

2. What is the capital of Venezuela?

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS PRIZE DRAW ENTRY FORM

I enclose 30 tokens from *The Times/Sunday Times* and wish to enter the prize draw. Send to: Around The World Prize Draw, PO Box 6665, London E2 8SR. Closing date Friday January 12, 1996

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms .... First Name ....
Surname ....
Address ....
.... Postcode..............................

It would help us if you answered these four questions:

1. Which of the following age groups do you fall into? (Please tick box)

1) 15-24 ☐ 2) 25-34 ☐ 3) 35-44 ☐
4) 45-54 ☐ 5) 55-64 ☐ 6) 65+ ☐

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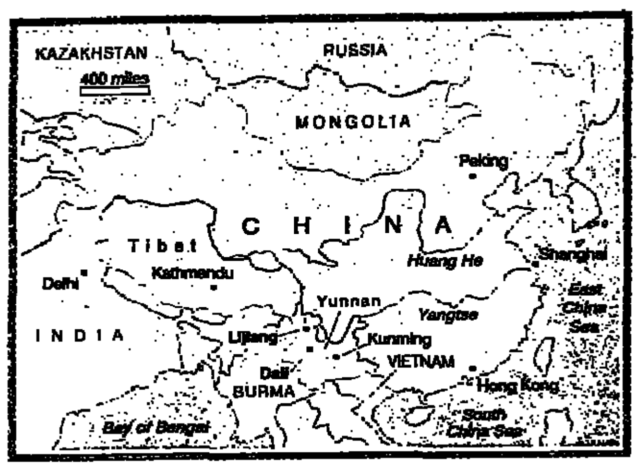
IN THE SUNDAY TIMES TOMORROW: WIN A CARIBBEAN EXPLORER CRUISE

ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS: Off the beaten track in traditional China …

Smiles under weeping willows



WORLD PICTURES

A market trader with his wares in Kunming, Yunnan's crowded noisy capital

I was watching a rat at the time. It was using an electricity cable above my head to cross a narrow cobbled street. It was in no hurry and, on reaching the middle, it paused and showed off, wobbling like a top trapeze artist. Clever Ratty, more *Wind in the Willows* cute than a plague-carrying pest.

For a second, on a June morning with the rain coming down, I thought the altitude was affecting me. Here I was 2,000 miles from Peking, in a tiny town called Lijiang, in the province of Yunnan, whose borders reach to Tibet, Burma and Vietnam, thinking rats were cute. As I mused, a voice came over my shoulder: "Come in, come in. Take photographs, come in."

An elderly man had heard the rest of our small group chatter in English as they paused to admire a woman weaving in a window. "Come in," he insisted. So we did. Such an invitation is a welcome break from the tourist round of temples, museums, pagodas and stunning views.

Yang Mingyi is a poet. His house, a series of small, verandahed rooms around a court yard, has a room dedicated to his poems, some with English translations. One wall was a eulogy celebrating the 100th anniversary, in 1993, of the birth of Chairman Mao, (a man of genius without equal in the world … renowned for his perfect boldness of vision); another honoured women, and a third gloried at the prospect of an airport which will open next year. It will bring more visitors.

Yang Mingyi likes visitors. The Han Chinese from the rapidly developing eastern coastal towns, who come west to beat the heat, can be a pain. They sometimes look down on Yunnan's ethnic minorities, viewing them as poor, backward peasants. But foreigners are different. We stop and chat and perhaps learn something. Yang Mingyi's poems share wall space with postcards and photographs from transient friends like us. Other trophies bear distinguished names. Did we know Bruce Chatwin, he asked; holding up a copy of *Songlines*? I said I had never met Chatwin, but had reviewed the book he was holding for *The Times*. That earned me the right to be shown a proof copy of another book by Peter Goullart which in turn led to a conversation about Joseph Rock.

For a place so remote, so difficult to reach — it took us two plane journeys, one overnight train trip, plus a bumpy bus ride — Lijiang has attracted some remarkable people. Rock was an Austro-American botanist who made his home in Lijiang in 1922 and stayed on and off for 30 years. He came for the plants and with others transported many to fill Europe's gardens with camellia, rhododendron, azalea, hibiscus, and hollyhock. Goullart, a white Russian, also lived there from 1940 for a decade and in *Forgotten Kingdom* paints an evocative picture of pre-communist China. Then Lijiang was feudal, barbaric and fit only for the brave.

More recently, of course, there was the much acclaimed Channel 4 series, *Beyond the Clouds*, which managed to show life in Lijiang in close up — the bickering and boredom, the prettiness and poverty, struggle and change — without making fools of the people.

It's easy to see what attracts us all. Lijiang looks as though it has been lifted from a willow-pattern plate. The town is built around streams edged with weeping willows. The streets are paved with red granite; the roofs have upturned eaves. At 2,400m above sea level, the air is pure and the climate without extremes. The mountains block out the northern cold winds, so winters are cool and dry and summers warm and wet.

And inside the pretty town live colourful people. Yunnan is home for a number of ethnic minorities; Lijiang has at least five, of which the largest is the Naxi, descended from Tibetan nomads. They have a brilliant history and culture, including an interesting way with women. Part of the tribe, living even closer to the Tibetan border, contain the remnants of a matriarchal society. There is no marriage, the men stay with their mothers during the day and work their fields, and then visit their lovers at night. Both property and children belong to women.

The Lijiang Naxi women can't claim ownership but still play a prominent part in running things. The older women can be seen heading for the market, in national costume and lugging produce in baskets on their backs. The young adopt fashions seen on television, knee length stockings, leggings and Miss Selfridge-style frocks. The boys looked bored. They linger in streets flicking cards, imitating a kung fu movement that can kill. Or they visit the Playroom of the Magnificent Electron, where video games are based on martial arts.

While costumes change, Naxi culture, particularly music, flourishes after years of suppression. The town has an orchestra, mostly male, mostly old, under the direction of Xuan Ke. He studied Western classical music and for such decadence spent 17 years in a tin mine. He appears, unnamed, in Chatwin's book.

All this has, in the past, excited scholars and backpackers. But not money-spending tourists. The Chinese Government wants tourism to enhance economic growth, particularly in remote areas. It will use its ethnic minorities as bait. So Lijiang will get a posh hotel and an airport. So too will Dali, a day's bus ride away, and home to the Bai people. It is not so picturesque, but the surrounding area is just as glorious, particularly *Erhai Lake* on which we spent a memorable afternoon visiting tiny islands with shrines to the Goddess of Mercy. Dali is being hailed as the new Kathmandu and, being bigger than Lijiang, has a livelier nightlife. You can take part in an ancient tea-drinking ceremony, have a massage or join a roadside karaoke session. You can also shop until 11pm for trinkets ancient and modern, have a pair of silk pyjamas made within 24 hours for £10 or a pair of trousers for £4.

Visitors to both Dali and Lijiang have to pass through Kunming, Yunnan's capital. Like all big cities in China it is polluted, crowded and noisy. However, it is well worth finding the English language bookshop where you can buy guide books with a Chinese perspective for 40p, classical and modern literature for less than £1, or a collection of interviews with 70 ordinary Chinese talking about their lives for only £2.

In Kunming, at the King World hotel, I discovered, in the lobby, the best of loos. I thought this accolade belonged to Claridge's in London, but here, as well as running the water into a handbasin and holding out a fresh towel, a young girl will offer to spray you with cologne, and squirt hand cream into your palms.

Top hotels like this can compete with the best anywhere. They have business centres with fax machines and air conditioning.

On my previous visit seven years ago China was no place for the comfort-seeking traveller. It is now. I had anticipated a hardship trip, my luggage stuffed with a medical kit, a mosquito net, pills and potions and my own chopsticks fearing that I be given badly washed utensils. Not at all.

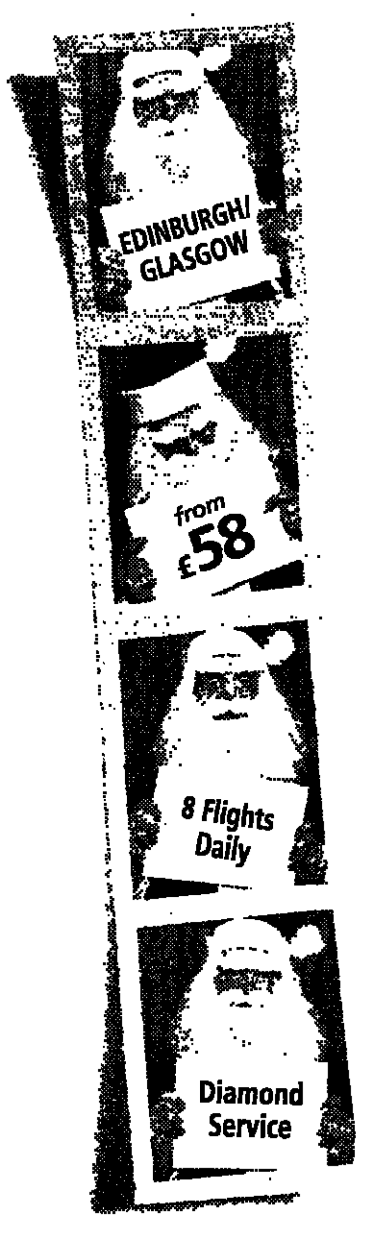
China is changing fast. There are filthy loos at tourist sites, although the Chinese claim to be building 4,000 "tourist loos". And the overnight train was squirm-making, particularly the dirty sheets. But I wouldn't have missed the ride. I learnt to play poker. And I won.

LINDA CHRISTMAS

Fact file

☐ The author was a guest of Air China, China International Travel Service and Regent Holidays, 15 John Street, Bristol BS1 2HR (0117-921 1711). Regent Holidays are China specialists and will arrange individual itineraries. The cost of the above trip, in a group, excluding air fares, would be about £1,500 and individually about £1,800.

☐ Air fare London-Peking is from £550. Air fare Peking-Chengdu-Kunming-Peking, £300. Four-star hotels, about £60 a night for a double room. Two-star hotel (Lijiang or Dali Guesthouse) £15-£20. Meal in restaurant £4 per head. Visa £35. Books: both the Blue Guide and Lonely Planet feature China.



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... and a magical trip down the Orinoco through Venezuela's enchanted forests and tranquil flatlands

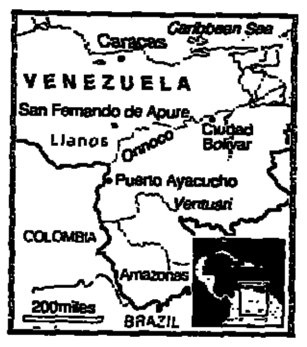
Brief encounter with beauty and the beasts

Thirty seconds into my white-water rafting experience on the Orinoco River, I decided that I was rather attached to my life. After 60 seconds, I was resigned to losing it; the only thing which remained unresolved was whether the crocodiles would get me before the piranhas did, and if death by drowning were preferable to either of these eventualities.

There were still 29 minutes left for such unpleasant thoughts, and of being soaked and shaken by mountainous waves crashing down on our flimsy rubber raft; I learnt afterwards that negotiating the Atures Rapids usually takes two hours — only the fact that the river was swollen by heavy rain made our boatman decide to shorten the trip.

It was some comfort to know that I was not the only person to have found this a daunting experience. In 1618, Sir Walter Raleigh was prevented from reaching the legendary city of El Dorado by the impossibility of forging the Orinoco rapids.

The cheap thrills to be had from such theme-park style adventures were, in any case, far less exciting than some of the other activities we sampled during our stay in Venezuela. Bird-watching, for one. Hato El Cedral, a working cattle ranch in the beautiful, remote Llanos region — about one hour's flight from Caracas and three hours' drive from San Fernando de Apure — was an ornithologist's paradise, with more than 200 species of birds, as well as other wildlife such as cayman, capybaras, an endearingly inscrutable rodent resembling a large guinea pig, anacondas, and freshwater dolphins in its marshes and savannahs. Getting up before dawn to climb aboard a truck for an hour-long journey into the middle of nowhere was unforgettable — enormous skies brooding over mirror-like lagoons, empty dirt roads stretching as far as the eye can see, and an immense quiet broken only by the sudden cry of a bird. Later that day, we journeyed by boat into the marshlands — a freshwater sea interspersed with floating islands of water hyacinth — to fish for piranha, which we did with some success until interrupted by a crocodile, drawn by the smell of fresh meat we had been using as bait. This was no ordinary crocodile, our guide told us, but an Orinoco crocodile — one of only 3,000 left in the world. We looked at it with renewed respect.



It was the high point of a remarkable day: spotting kingfishers and vermilion flycatchers swooping low over the river, and macaws flying up with a flash of blue and scarlet wings; scanning the undergrowth for the more sombre plumage of the rarer birds — such as the bizarre, leaf-eating hoatzin, distant cousin of *Archaeopteryx*. We sighted families of capybara, as well as turtles and cayman, howler monkeys, toucans, flocks of ibis and the ubiquitous caracara bird, whose onomatopoeic name evokes its call.

Next day, we flew to the little border town of Puerto Ayacucho, on the banks of the Orinoco — a half-hour flight which brought us into a different landscape, of mountains and forest. There, we spent a tranquil two hours journeying down the vast river on a boat like *The African Queen*. There was nothing to see but sky, water and trees — like a vision of the Earthly Paradise which Christopher Columbus believed he had found when he landed off the coast of Venezuela in 1498. Then it was on to the Rapids Experience — followed by a necessary shower and a change of clothes at Camp Calypso. This, like most of the camps we stayed at, was built to resemble an Indian village, with small huts, sleeping from two to six people, constructed around a dining area and bar. The accommodation was basic but tasteful: pink-washed walls, cane furniture and reed mats, as well as the obligatory ceiling fan.

Another feature common to all the places we stayed at was an emphasis on local cuisine — in this case Piaroa Indian. Delicacies featured on that evening's menu included *casabe*, a dry bread made from manioc, *palmitos*, (palm hearts) and *katara*, a spicy sauce made from water of yucca in which ants have been marinated — allegedly an aphrodisiac.

Camani Camp, on the banks of the River Ventuari, was the most luxurious of our "jungle camps". Accessible only by light aircraft, it offered a well-stocked bar, pool and all mod cons to offset the rustic simplicity of its thatched huts — an Amazonian version of Club Med. After lounging by the pool drinking rum coladas, we were ready to go on safari. Our guide took us along a jungle track, where sunlight filtered through interlaced leaves of palms, rubber trees, banana trees and giant ferns, and brilliant green and yellow butterflies rose in shimmering clouds. We climbed a rock wall to an observation platform, from which we looked down on the forest canopy, a tapestry of variegated green, stretching in all directions. The Venezuelan Amazon has 20,000 species of trees, but I soon gave up counting and just enjoyed the view.

After a delicious lunch of *pabellon criollo* (shredded beef, rice and black beans) and fried plantains, we set out on another river excursion, to visit a spectacular waterfall, where we swam in a rock pool before returning for more food and an evening of learning how to dance the Latin American way.

Of course, this kind of holiday is not cheap — which may limit the numbers of people visiting these remote and relatively unspoilt areas. What seems to be involved in promoting this kind of "sustainable tourism" is an exercise in damage limitation.

If enough revenue can be generated from tourism, the argument goes, it may be possible to avoid cutting down the rainforests for short-term gain. There is talk of putting a motorway across the Amazon jungle, to facilitate North American mining projects such as those which have already ruined the area around El Dorado — no longer a fabulous city of gold, but a wasteland.

In the face of such threatened destruction, the notion of luxury villages in the jungle seems suddenly less of an absurdity.

CHRISTINA KONING

ANNIE ANDERSON

Thrills and spills: white-water rafting on the Atures Rapids is not for the faint-hearted

Getting there

☐ The author was a guest of Corporturismo (the Venezuelan Tourist Board), Viasa Airlines and Avensa.

☐ She flew from London to Caracas (£495 return*), where she stayed one night at the Caracas Hilton (double £68, room only). From Caracas, she flew with Avensa to San Fernando de Apure and stayed three nights at Hato El Cedral at a cost of £540 for a double room including full board and excursions. She then flew to Puerto Ayacucho, where she stayed three nights at Camp Calypso (£270 including full board, excursions and transfers) and then by light aircraft to Camani Camp (£77 per night for a double room including full board, excursions and transfers). All prices are low season.

☐ Information: Iberia Group Reservations (0171-830 0011); South American Experience (0171-976 5511).

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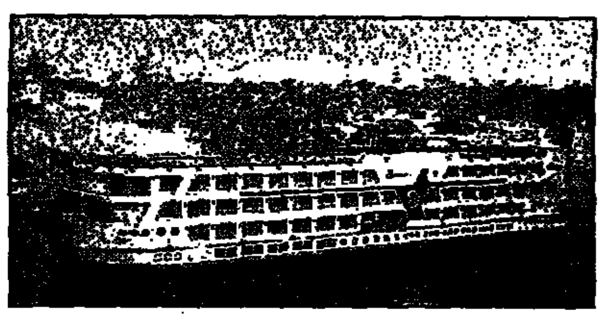

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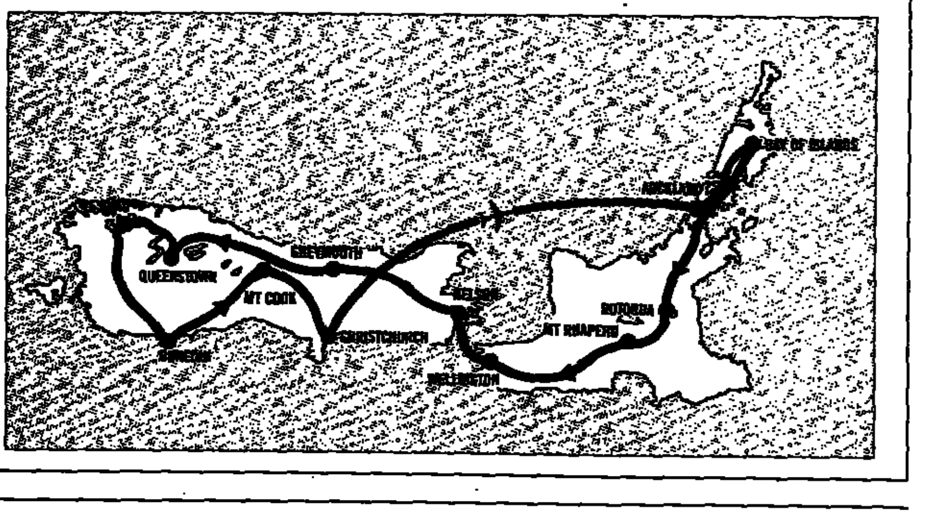

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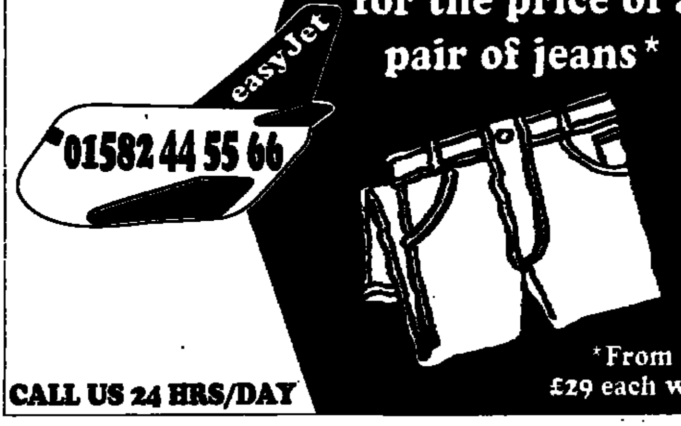

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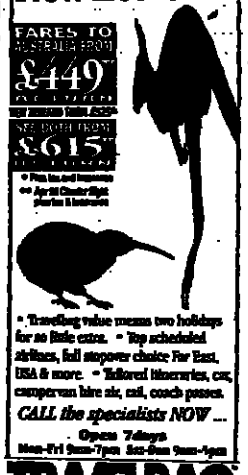

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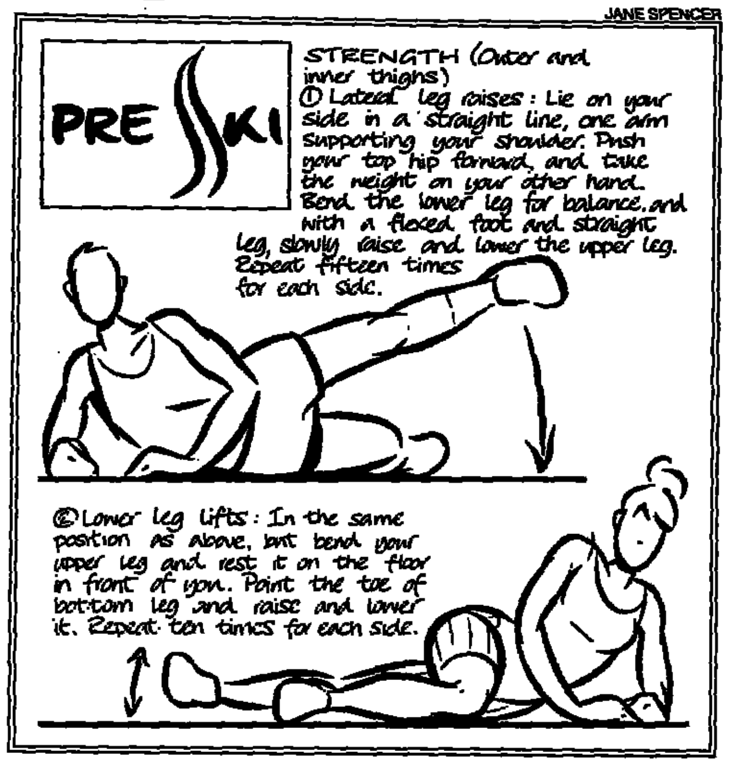
SKIING: A French clinic uses radical techniques to nurse skiers out of mediocrity and into deep powder

Sticks are for ... spearing cherries

JANE SPENCER



STRENGTH (Outer and inner thighs)

① Lateral leg raises: Lie on your side in a straight line, one arm supporting your shoulder. Push your top hip forward, and take the weight on your other hand. Bend the lower leg for balance, and with a flexed foot and straight leg, slowly raise and lower the upper leg. Repeat fifteen times for each side.

② Lower leg lifts: In the same position as above, but bend your upper leg and rest it on the floor in front of you. Point the toe of bottom leg and raise and lower it. Repeat ten times for each side.

● The above exercises are extracted from *Skilegs*, by Tessa Coker, available from the Ski Club of Great Britain, 118 Eaton Square, London SW1W 9AF, £2.50 including p&p. *The Times* cannot be held responsible for any injuries resulting from or sustained while carrying out the exercises and movements described.

The Ali Ross ski clinic at Tignes in France has no interest in fractured limbs, only in repairs to damaged technique and broken confidence. His belief is that skiers who indulge their sport for only a couple of weeks a year often find themselves on a plateau, barred by inability from graduating into the deep powder and adventurous ski terrain that lies off the beaten piste.

"There's a lot of false dash about. Too much sprackling and hoicking." Mr Ross slips into the Glasgow vernacular for ungainly movements. His clinic attracts those skiers who may be able to zip nonchalantly down a smoothly groomed piste in perfect conditions, ski tips flashing with more show than substance. But tilt the slope, layer it with a brittle crust or boiler plate ice, extinguish the sun and strengthen the wind and the dash quickly departs. "They start to sprackle," he says. We know what he means, we have all been sprackling for years.

We patients with our tattered techniques watch as Mr Ross demonstrates the correct way to ski. He descends the slope with the implacable style of a vintage Bentley coasting down a motorway, disdaining the fast traffic and presenting a lesson in elegance and control. This was effective skiing, he says, applicable to all weathers and every snow condition. "Put what you been taught up to now in the shredder," he says and starts to draw lines in the snow with his ski stick. We gather round for the message: it is "Back to Basics" time.

Mr Ross has taught skiing for more than 35 years and produced books and television series on the subject. Little has escaped his keen observation in the search for a way his students may escape that daunting plateau of limited competence. The answer lies in allowing the ski to do effectively what it is designed to, whatever the weather, snow condition or steepness of the slope. The key is in the first 90 degrees of the turn, from the twelve o'clock to the three o'clock position. However unnatural it may feel to a sprackler, the ski should be angled into the slope and held there firmly as it carves automatically through the fall-line. There should be lots of bent knee and angulation and no concern about keeping knees together or planting the ski sticks in the turn. The Ross premise is that parted skis provide a more solid platform: "Which is easier to stand on, a tightrope or a plank, eh?" Sticks get no more mention than if they were there to spear cherries or wave at a friend.

We follow Mr Ross, jettisoning years of supposedly bad practice as we go. Weight on the uphill ski, angulate and lean, allow the ski to carve the turn naturally. Sometimes it works, sometimes I feel like, and certainly resemble, a drunk attempting to lean on an invisible lamp post.

At the Ali Ross Ski Clinic in Tignes, students have to be prepared to go back to basics if they want to overcome their limited competence

The class contains a good cross-section of age and ability and most share the handicap blighting many British skiers; great enthusiasm for a sport they do not have time properly to master. The Ross technique, he points out, embodies what is taught to downhill racers who, of all skiers, must adopt the most efficient way of getting down the hill. Two classes each spend half a day under intensive instruction and the other half practising what they have been taught. Evenings are devoted to analysing video film of the day's efforts, brutal truth projected on a television screen, with individual lines for improvement drawn up for the following day.

Mr Ross is a man of infinite patience when it comes to analysing and dissecting skiing faults, full of sound advice and good humour. At the end of the introductory course most students were sure they could ski more effectively. One medical student who spent years sprackling but rarely fell over complained he had never spent so much time sprawled on the ground as he had trying to master the Ali Ross technique. The report on my progress suggested I remained stranded. "Ce n'est pas trop tard pour commencer un autre sport," was the bleak judgment. Chances are that, like hell, my plateau will have a few friends for company.

RONALD FAUX

● *The author was a guest of the Ali Ross Ski Clinic and Blaydon Lines. A five-day standard-level course costs £180. Chalet accommodation by Blaydon Lines starts at £359 for a week and covers flight, transfers, breakfast, packed lunch, afternoon tea and evening meal. Hotel packages from £459, room only. Details: Ski Solutions, 84 Pembroke Road, London W8 6NX (0171-602 9944).*

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Answers from Page 23

ZEPPOLE

(a) US slang for an Italian kind of doughnut. "There aren't a lot of food vendors. We wanted to *differentiate* this from other street fairs. Also, I didn't want people dropping *zeppoli* all over our books."

SEANAD EIREANN

(c) The upper house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland, the Irish for the Senate of Ireland. Bunreacht na hÉireann, 1937: "Seanad Eireann shall be composed of sixty members, of whom eleven shall be nominated members and forty-nine shall be elected members."

SPURIA

(a) Spurious works, words, etc., neuter plural of the Latin *spurius* spurious, cf. trivia, etc.

VALSPEAK

(a) A form of slang originating among teenage girls in the San Fernando Valley in southern California, short for valleyspeak. "On the record, in pure, uncut Valspeak, Moon laments in bubbly staccato that, '*Like my mother like makes me do the dishes. It's so gross*'."

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ATHLETIC stylish. academic. fifty-something desires tall humorous male counterpart based SE. Please Reply Box No 2319.

A TALL, long-legged woman. 60s. spirited. stylish and successful. seeks a warm. intelligent and amusing London man for stimulating conversation. laughter and lively times. Please Reply to Box No 2229.

ATTRACTIVE black lady. 40s. graduate professional. 5'6 own home and car. loves gardening. music and theatre. youngest child at university. I am looking for an honest ordinary guy who is tired of being alone. Must be over 40. Photo will be returned. Please Reply to Box No 2303.

ATTRACTIVE caring professional lady early 50s slim 5'6" with many interests - adventuresome and home loving. Seeks special companion. S. Bucks. Pls Reply Box No 2388.

ATTRACTIVE tall. sporty. well travelled guy 33. seeks witty. slim lady 23-35 London/Surrey area. Photo pls. Box No 2324.

AUBURN curls. laughing eyes and a warm smile. creative aquarian 35. 5'7. shapely curves and a wicked SOH. wants to have an entertaining time with a tall brawny chap not worried by mild eccentricity and a low boredom threshold! Photo preferred. North West. Please Reply to Box No 2369.

BETWEEN here & the Mediterranean. I live. Tall. dark. gorgeous. feminine. elegant. I look. Twin sons. I adore. Travelling. country/city life. foreign foods. diving. world affairs. I enjoy. Import/export. I do. Sociable. affectionate. humorous. 42. I am. Cosmopolitan. handsome. classy businessman. I need. Tel. & Photo pls. South. Box 2164.

CHARMING slim fair lady 40 seeks reciprocal affection from 40+ man who enjoys conversation. London and seeing the funny side of things. Photo please. Reply to Box No 2259.

CHESHIRE based mrktg exec young 48. attractive. sophisticated. elegant. scorpio with fun personality who enjoys gd things in life. music. travel. gd food & wine WLTM attractive affectionate solvent male 48ish for relationship. Photo please. Box No 2304.

COMPANION - 55 sought. various interests. for petite. gregarious secretary. Reply Box 2340

COUNTRY loving/living retired nurse. public school. attractive. slim. active brunette. SOH. warm. sparky personality. wide interests. London visits. n/s. solvent. loves dogs WLTM similar educated tall chap. fit. 60s-70s for friendly meetings companionship maybe more. London/SW and West country. Please Reply to Box No 2233.

CREATIVE successful businesswoman. attractive. warm. young 50. aspiring poet would like to be diverted by a Billy Connolly/Mr Darcy who is prepared to adore occasionally. Please Reply to Box No 2366.

5'2" eyes of blue. prof attractive 30 something. into travel. cinema. writing. arts. tap dancing. dining out. pubs. walks. seeks prof considerate. intelligent guy up to 45 initially for friendship. S/SW England. Box No 2362.

DREAM – gentleman who's kind. honest. good looking and solvent. Reality - none of the above. So prove reality wrong. Attractive. mid 40's. petite brunette. with laughter lines and eternal optimism awaits chatty letter with photo please. South East. Reply to Box No 2364

FRENCH. fit. fun loving. affectionate. lovely. 30. seeks n/s gentleman. 29-36. Surrey. Please Reply to Box No 2230.

HIGHLY attractive ageless nordic lady. internationally educated linguist. lovely homes northern Europe. Cote d'Azur. warm fun and intellectual interests. seeks retired gentleman of high social standing. around 68. for togetherness in France. UK. elsewhere. Box No 2381

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IS THERE one man and his dog in Northants/Warks seeking *female* company? Solvent. sporty. 28yr lady who loves travel. music and countryside looking for soulmate. Please Reply to Box No 2361

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KEEN bridge player (club level). Cheerful. knowledgeable. kind hearted. mid 60s. enjoys eating out. classical music and opera seeks n/s gent. West London. Please Reply to Box No 2214.

KIND. warm. loving. feminine. 5'6". attractive. latin looks. unique personality. good figure. 37. wants good. honest. lovely man. 37-52 with impulsive fun nature. to laugh together. Photo please. Reply Box No 2357

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MERRY widow 1932 vintage. attractive. erudite. many interests. SOH. own home. seeks south based princely counterpart. Box No 2295.

MYSTIQUE - oriental. London based. elegant. sensual and educated seeks n/s. prof/business gentleman. 38-58 for love and sincere relationship. Photos appreciated. Reply Box 2261

NEW YEAR à deux at Pemberley? Elizabeth Bennett. 1942 vintage. awaits her invitation from Darcy. Portrait essential. Please Reply Box 2209.

PARAMEDIC Black. attractive. slim. separated. 51. WLTM kind. sincere gentleman. London area. Box No 2183.

PROFESSIONAL single parent. n/s. grad. v.attractive and solvent WLTM opposite with GSOH. similar constraints to *enjoy the fun and struggles of* family life in S.E. Photo please. Reply to Box No 2351

POCKET BLONDE *Hotelier* (S.W. Wales). Very attractive. warm. witty and outgoing. n/s. WLTM a handsome. mature. gentleman equally as successful. caring. bright and funny. preferably under 50. own hair and teeth essential. eclectic interests!. Photo preferred. Please Reply to Box No 2363

SWAP your celibacy for my Christmas stockings? - Educated. literary? mature. successful men only 40+. Central London. Please Reply Box 2186

TALL slim. fair haired. kind hearted widow. loves old houses. wants tall. intelligent. solvent. kind. caring man. 50-65. Reply to Box No 2355

VERY attractive educated young 40s blonde widow looking for a solvent. cultured. gentleman for lasting relationship to help me with my properties London and abroad and to enjoy together the best things in life. Please Reply to Box No 2332.

WENDY (attractive 46). WLTM Peter Pan (50'ish) to be her Mr Darling. W Sheffield. Please Reply to Box No 2372

ZZZzzz *Wake up! Close Encounters* is open Saturday and Sunday. Call free 0800 141 141.

SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS

GENTLEMEN

ABSOLUTELY Hetrosexual female seeks others. ages 40-60 for mutual support and shared SOH. perhaps like me feeling 'cut off' and still a bit guilty 5 years after break-up of marriage. Recently moved SW London. Interests - music (Schubert. Brahms. Mahler etc). art. reading. travel. mid price eating. not quite tee total. not quite veg. Please Reply to Box 2336.

ADORE OPERA. champagne. balls. theatre. travel? Cultured Englishman. personable boyish 42. 5ft 10'. n/s. London based. seeks gorgeous like-minded. ultra-elegant. superior lady. Photo Please. Box No 2380

A 6ft 2in. blue eyed. baby boomer. looking for an intelligent. 38-46 yr old partner. Preferably W. Midlands/ Cotswolds Modesty prevents too many superlative but. trumpets apart. I am an ex high flying professional who now recognises that there is more to life than work. My friends say I am stylish. relaxed. charismatic and unpretentious with a young outlook on life. If you would like to know more why not drop me a line with your phone number and your photograph. Please *Reply to Box No 2344*

AMIABLE *professional* man 46. romantic and musical wishes to share family life with like minded woman. London Please Reply to Box No 2219

A NEW man for Xmas? If you're 28-44, bright & merry. I could be your ideal gift. Just present me with photo & no. and you could have a smart new package to unwrap. Remember, a man can be for life, not just Xmas. Box No 2356.

ARCHITECT. 59. compassionate. caring. hedonistic optimistic. seeks slimish soulmate. Cambs. Please Reply to Box No 2240

ARE you open. aware. interested in personal growth? If yes and live in South East. and are late 30s early 40s I would love to meet you. I am a tall. slim. 49ish. successful professional looking for someone with whom to share a fulfilling life. Photo appreciated. Box 2267.

ASIAN male. professional. single. 31. 5'7" with GSOH. caring outgoing. happy but lonely. seeks lady for fun and friendship. Plse Rply to Box No 2289

A TRUE *Encounter?* Do you know what you will be doing at Christmas? I'm looking *for* you! Me: Successful hard working executive. young. fit. just over 40. living abroad temporarily. You: intelligent woman with wit and panache who enjoys travel. sports. the arts. perhaps wintersports or just good conversation. You are either London based or you live somewhere in the EU (or nearby) I'm in London often and would like to meet you! Reply to Box 2385 with telephone & photo please.

BUSINESSMAN very successful. fit. young 50. central London. no ties. seeks attractive. presentable. lady. Must be good company. Wide interests. including travel. theatre. cinema. socialising. country weekends. Photograph appreciated. Please Reply to Box No 2318.

CHESHIRE rich. slim. attractive. 32 year old. enjoys good food. wine. dancing and travel. seeks. good looking. fun. honest. soul mate to travel the world. Photo essential. Box No 1382.

DALES/*West* Yorks Prof gentleman seeks slim lady 40-50 to *share thoughts. outings. feelings.* perhaps more Box 2238

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DOCTOR/MEDICAL Scientist. Widower. 68. slim. active. semi-retired. book-lover. Offers companionship. wine and log-fire in half-completed. but beautifully sited. isolated cottage with attached jungle on high and windy hill near Hereford. to slim lady 50-65. graduate or educated. wishing to opt out/write/paint/study/create kitchen garden/ or use as a base for outworking. The best is indeed yet to be. but there is much to do en route. Still private type of lady not afraid of solitude and young enough to break free from their past. Do not reply on impulse. think this through as must be prepared to relocate at some stage. Please no pen friends. week-enders. counsellors J.P.'s or other memsahibs embedded in the social life of their community. Recent photo ensures reply. Please reply Box No 2188

DENTAL SURGEON interested in activities that tax and enhance the capabilities of both brain and body. Fifties. optimistic. sensitive. slightly workaholic. RGSOH (I won't go the whole hog). Seeks complimentary woman for partnership. London. Box No 2292

EXCEPTIONAL London guy with realistic approach to whats life and access to material possessions WLTM an educated. adventurous and attractive lady. Photo/Phone appreciated. Please Reply to Box No 2343

INCURABLE romantic. fit. n/s. 52. handsome. educated. witty. 6ft. tactile. loyal. interests include magnotherapy. antiques. tennis. travel (favorites Sydney. Bermuda. Bali) fun to be with. seeks solvent. slim. romantic lady to spoil and pamper and satisfy every need. Photo essential. London/ Chislehurst. Reply Box No 2281

INTELLIGENT attractive man (early 40s) with own cars. home. successful business in Brighton and London. Likes tennis. theatre. dining out. WLTM attractive. slim lady (under 45) with GSOH for friendship and/or romance. Photo appreciated and returned. Please Reply to Box No 2184.

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N.W. CUMBRIA Countryside. widower 52. n/s. no children. animal lover. enjoys walking. cycling. swimming. gardening and dining out. Seeks sincere. kind. homeloving lady to share what life has to offer. Please Reply to Box No 2252

NICE GUY 47. seeks that special lady for Christmas and beyond. (Photo appreciated) Please Reply to Box No 2362

NORTH WEST successful businessman 35. tall. dark. handsome. divorced. no ties. well travelled. educated. sincere. good lifestyle. down to earth attitude with GSOH. but knows what he is looking for. I seek a single lady under 35. very attractive. slim size 8-10 with style. intelligence and elegance and a GSOH. but would not normally reply to personal ads! Please write with essential photograph. Box 2314.

WILTSHIRE Widower. 56. n/s. needs female company. 40-55. to restart living and loving. All offers considered. Box No 2243

SEMI early retired grad. male. 50's. tall. arts orientated. seeks n/s intelligent. lovable lady. without constraints. for xmas and beyond. Hants or adjacent. Please Reply to Box No 2282

ROMANTIC Leo. handsome. active. own business. Mediterranean origin. enjoys keep fit. outings. adores the sea and the sun. travels a lot. looking for Mrs Right to share the love and the laughter and what comes after. Must be 20-30. with GSOH and good looking. romantic and above all. enjoy travelling. Photo please. Reply to Box No 2208

SEVENTYISH retired lecturer. arts graduate. fit and active. n/s WLTM sixtyish (or younger) woman. South West. Please Reply to Box No 2321.

SINCERE, worldly. professional 50 seeks similar solvent cultured. raven headed. attractive lady 35-40 to shower affection. share souls and lifes pleasures. Please drop a line & exchange photographs - Box No 2069.

SINGLE professional. attractive. caring. male. 35. fit and sporty. Very solvent. enjoys skiing. walking and countryside. Seeks attractive. affectionate. n/s single female. 22-32. for lasting relationship. Hampshire. Photo please to Box No 2367

SINGLE bit seeks byte. Computer programmer. 40. graduate. n/s. likes travel. sightseeing. history. classical music. walking. wishes to open window of opportunity to n/s female preferably within 100 miles of Derby. Please Reply to Box No 2364.

SUCCESSFUL, busy. but relish my time off. 56. 5'10". on my own 2 yrs+. Practical. francophile. wind in my hair. firesides. Radio 3. music. eating out. walking. cycling etc. that's me. Happy. but yearning to fill that gap. Seeks slim brunette (?) 40-50. S. Midlands. but can travel. Box No 2161.

SUCCESSFUL Indian professional 44. seeking to romance with a 25-35 year old childless attractive. sporty lady. Phone number please. Box No 2334.

SURREY based professional. newly single. own business. n/s. young 52. seeks special slim elegant sensuous lady. 30-45. for fun. outings. weekends. holidays. If you want lots of TLC apply (photo ensures reply) Box No 2169.

TALL dark rogue. 30. enjoys all types of sports. looking to meet attractive. playful female. 20s for fun and friendship. Photo appreciated (Warwickshire area.) Please Reply Box 2325.

TALL, handsome. 50 year old professional. n/s. living Lincolnshire. seeks younger. attractive. happy lady for a loving. tender. permanent relationship. You must love the countryside and lots of cuddles in front of the fire. Letter and photo please. Reply Box 2191

TENNIS PRO early 30's. looking for one and only. Absolutely ready for meaningful relationship. Interests include. photography. modern art and motorbikes. If you are an attractive and sincere young woman in your 20's-30's and can see yourself sharing one or more of the above. then why don't we get together?. Photo appreciated. All replies answered. London. Reply to Box No 2368.

XMAS in the Sun!! Successful. solvent. 35 year old international businessman looking for that special lady (23-33) who has brains and body in harmony to spend xmas with at his Florida Beach home. Recent photo and phone number ensures response. Please Reply to Box No 2274.

ZZZzzz Wake up! Close Encounters is open Saturday and Sunday. Call free 0800 141 141.

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GAMES

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

FOR more than 30 years, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* have supported the British Championship for schools' teams. Many of Britain's top players, including Nigel Short, Jon Speelman, Michael Adams and Julian Hodgson, have come up through this event.

During this period, though, there has been no parallel championship specifically for individual school players. This obvious gap in the chess calendar has now been rectified by junior organiser Michael Basman, with the support of Intel and the Brain Trust Charity.

Basman's plans are, indeed, ambitious. The largest chess tournament in the world is due to start next spring term in schools throughout Britain. Up to 1,000 schools and 30,000 players are expected to take part. The first stages of the tournament will be played in the schools themselves, and in these children of all ages will win badges, books, chess sets and mascots. The best players from each school progress to the area "Megafinals" in May, at age ranges Under-7, Under-8, Under-9, Under-10, Under-11, Under-14 and Under-18. Finally, the National "Gigafinal" will be held in June or July for the top players from each area. The closing date is technically December 10, but all schools wishing to enter who contact Michael Basman (Tel: 0181-397 1826) over the next week will be included.

The following game was won by 14-year-old Jessica Ho, who shared first place in the British Under-14 and Under-15 Girls Championships this year.

White: Jo Badger
Black: Jessica Ho
British Under-14 Championship
Swansea, August 1995
Sicilian Defence

1	e4	c5	2	Nc3	Nc6
3	f4	g6	4	Nf3	Bg7
5	Bb5	Nd4	6	0-0	e6
7	Bc4				

This is unduly passive. A more active procedure is 7 e5

7	...	Ne7	8	d3	a6
9	a4	d5	10	Ba2	0-0
11	Ne2				

Better would be 11 Nxd4, while consideration should still be given to blotting out Black's king's bishop with 11 e5.

11 ... Nxf3+ 12 gxf3. Unfortunately, this move is forced, since 12 Rxf3 fails to 12 ... dxe4.

Now, however, White suffers from a weakened kingside pawn structure.

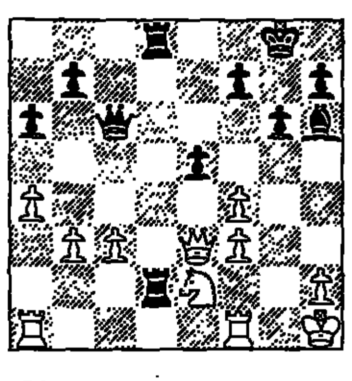
12	...	Bd7	13	Bb3	Qc7
14	c3	Rfd8	15	Qe1	c4
16	Bc2	cxd3	17	Bxd3	dxe4
18	Bxe4				

White's shattered pawns on the f-file guarantee a long term win for Black. If White tries to eradicate the weakness with 18 fxe4 then 18 ... Bxa4 would win a pawn.

18	...	Nf5	19	Kh1	Bc6
20	Qf2	Rd7	21	Ng3	Rad8
22	Be3	Nxe3			

Of course Black does not allow Bb6.

23	Qxe3	Bh6	24	Ne2	Rd2
25	b3	e5	26	Bxc6	Qxc6



White's next move is a counsel of despair but there was, in any case, no defence against Black's threat of ... exf4.

27 Qxe5 Re8. This skewer forces the win of White's knight.

28 Nd4 Rxe5 29 Nxc6 Ree2.

The threat of checkmate starting with ... Rxh2+ gives White no time to save the attacked knight on c6.

30 Rfe1 bxc6 31 Rxe2 Rxe2. And White, a piece down, soon resigned.

WINNING MOVE

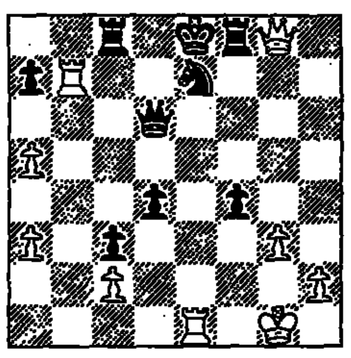
By Raymond Keene

This position is from the game Hartston - Whiteley, England 1974. In the early seventies, chess journalist William Hartston was known as a dangerous attacking player. Here is an example of his dynamic play. White to play and win.

Send your answers on a postcard to *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first three correct answers drawn on Thursday will win a British Chess Magazine publication. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1 ... Qxf7+

Last week's winners: A. Hall, Goring-by-Sea, W Sussex; D. V. Jones, Bitterne, Southampton; T. J. Mills, Telford, Shropshire.



PUNCHLINE

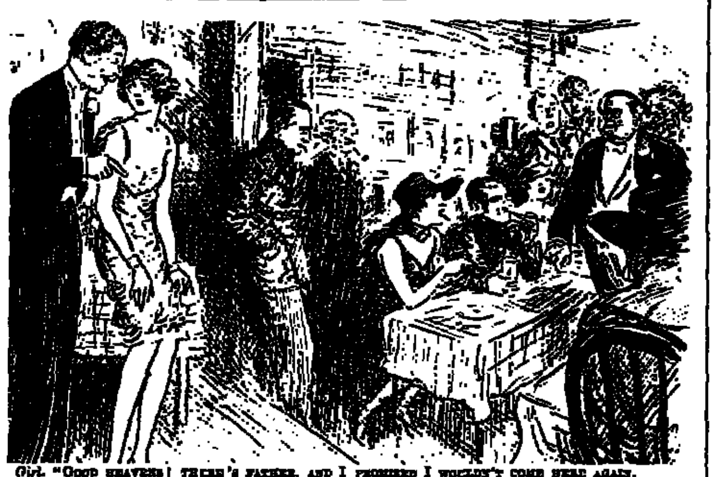
READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon, right. The cartoon, from the Punch library, includes the contemporary caption.

The cartoon will be printed again next week on the Games page with a caption selected from those submitted.

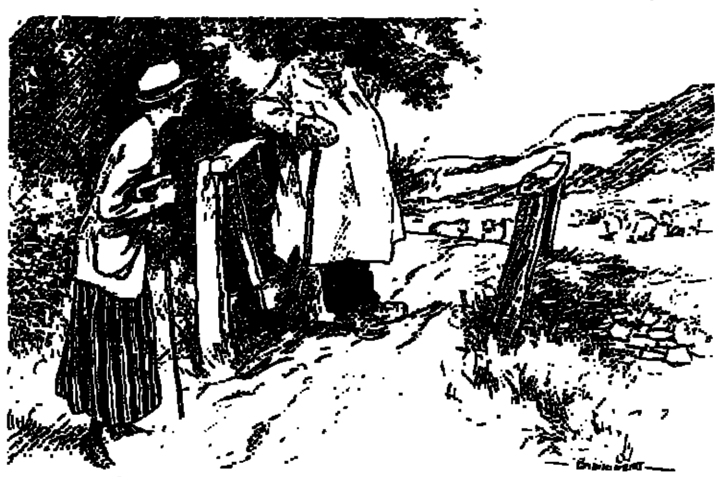
Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: Cartoon caption 86, Weekend Games Page, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The editor's decision is final.

The closing date for entries is Wednesday, December 13.



Girl. "Good heavens! There's father, and I promised I wouldn't come here again. What on earth shall I do?"
Her Partner. "Oh, that's all right; just ask him what he means by being in a place like this."



"It's only for art class, Farmer Brown — so half a one would do."

The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by Mrs T. Howland, of Ullingswick, near Hereford

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

ZEPPOLE
a. A doughnut
b. A jurymast
c. A Zeppelin carriage

SEANAD EIREANN
a. A fertility goddess
b. Druidical sacred books
c. A legislative body

SPURIA
a. Spurious works
b. Spindrift
c. A Roman goddess

VALSPEAK
a. Teenage slang
b. The head of a valley
c. Operatic declamation

Answers on page 22

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

"WOULD he have done this if he had that" is often the question to ask yourself when you have a difficult decision in the play. It didn't produce the winning defence on this hand, from the match between France and Indonesia in the recent Bermuda Bowl.

Dealer East — Game All, IMP's

North: ♠KQJ5432 ♥9 ♦87 ♣K109

East: ♠7 ♥6 ♦Q1042 ♣AQJ8432

W	N	E	S
Perron	Sacul	Chemla	Karwur
-	-	4♣	4♥
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♥

All Pass
Contract: Six Hearts by South
Lead: six of clubs

Chemla (one of France's all-time greats, and in the top twenty of the current world rankings) won dummy's ten of clubs with the jack, South following with the seven. It seemed to Chemla that South could hardly be missing another ace — after all, South had room to use Blackwood over North's Four Spades. If the declarer had something like:

♠A ♥AKQJxxx ♦AKxx ♣x

a heart shift would prevent the ruff, and at the same time kill the entry to dummy. So Chemla played a trump. It wasn't a success:

North: ♠KQJ5432 ♥9 ♦87 ♣K109

West: ♠1096 ♥10752 ♦AJ65 ♣65

East: ♠7 ♥6 ♦Q1042 ♣AQJ8432

South: ♠A8 ♥AKQJ843 ♦K93 ♣7

As you can see, South *was* missing the ace of diamonds. After the trump switch all the diamonds went away on dummy's spades.

What should be your attitude when that sort of thing happens? In a book on poker Terence Reese addressed a similar question. A reader complained that his opponents were always making unsound plays; should he adjust his classical game to compensate? Reese's magisterial reply was that if one was racing in a Ferrari against an old banger, it wasn't necessary to cut corners — the Ferrari would always win in the long run.

That is also the correct attitude in bridge. Usually, you should assume your opponents are playing sensibly. That's why I think Chemla was correct to switch to trumps. If the opponents do something unsound, like Karwur's leap to Six Hearts, they may occasionally score a coup, but in the long run the Ferrari style will triumph.

● *The 1996 Macallan International Pairs Championship will be played in London at the end of January. Information: 0181-878 5844.*

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott

WHEELS AND SOMERSAULTS

For variety, trying your hand at racing a cow seemed too good to be true. Sadly, it is. Codemasters' **Super Skidmarks** is a rally racer for the Sega Mega Drive, with a choice of 40 or so dirt-track courses. Up to four humans can compete simultaneously on one game console, though even that isn't enough this time.

The choice of vehicles includes the poor old cow. The humour stakes would be in with a chance were the cows to run around energetically. But these are four-wheeled, not four-legged, cows. So it is just the same as racing anything else.

If you'd rather be going the rounds in a ring, **Virtua Fighter**, for Saturn, will take some beating. One of the new beat-'em-ups for Sega's 32-bit game consoles, the game has four levels but is unremitting on the normal setting.

Still, should you like your fighters to be show-offs, this is the game for you. Until you get the hang of it, the bouts are unlikely to last longer than a few seconds, and the winner really milks the situation. He, or she, bounds about doing somersaults, flexing muscles, jumping gleefully and, frankly, deserves a poke in the eye. The game is impressive, but exhausting.

As the season of goodwill is upon us we have pushed back the deadline for Cyberspace Nineteen, which now closes at midnight on Tuesday, December 12. It offers 12 readers the chance to win the box-office hit, *Forrest Gump*, on CDi. In the film, Forrest learns from his mum: "Life is like a box of chocolates, Forrest. You never know what you're going to get."

To enter Cyberspace Nineteen, complete Mrs Gump's adage in your own humorous words. How, in your mind, might life be like a box of chocolates? Send your revised maxim, with your name, age, address and telephone number, to: Cyberspace Nineteen, Computer Games, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. You may also fax entries to us at 0171-729 6791. The competition is open to anyone aged 12 or over and the judges will not enter into additional correspondence.

Kathy Smith, a personal trainer on CDi

FIT FOR CHRISTMAS

Staying with fast-approaching Christmas, for most of us it spells disaster for the waistline. Christmas dinner is but a part of the problem: more unnecessary calories are guzzled down in the form of drinks at office parties, or nuts and chocolates in front of the telly.

Several multimedia titles are aimed at the health-conscious, such as **Kathy Smith Personal Trainer**, on CDi. We meet Kathy only after being warned: "Please consult your doctor before beginning this, or any, exercise programme." If I told my doctor he'd have hysterics.

Kathy, an American, gently encourages the viewer along. Click on the aims of your training sortie — Lose Weight, Tone Muscles, Improve Stamina and Reduce Stress — and Kathy comes up with your tailor-made programme. Once you've got a programme, much of the title then runs like a workout video. It's engaging and entertaining. Whether yesterday's fitness guru Eileen Fowler would have approved is another matter.

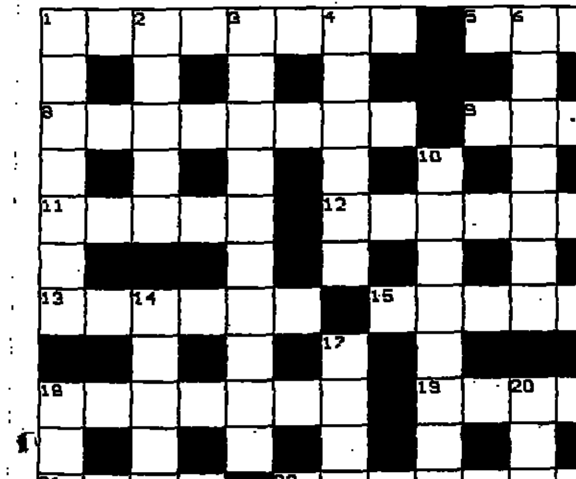
Setting a less frantic fitness pace is Expert's **Diet**, a budget-title for the PC on floppy disc and CD-Rom. As the title suggests, this is concerned with your intake. Again, you input your vital statistics and an ideal weight target, then the programme, using graphs and reports, helps you to keep focused on a healthy programme. The title has a database of 2,400 food items, and will create custom meal plans to suit your aims and palate and, equally importantly, keep track of your vitamin and mineral intake.

Another sure way to advance your diet, healthy or otherwise, is with **Great Gourmet**. Also budget-priced from Expert, but only available on CD-Rom, this serves up more than 10,000 recipes to make meal planning a doddle. All the recipes have been kitchen-tested and can be tracked down by category, name or ingredient. Once selected, you can call up a picture of the dish or its nutritional information and each recipe can be edited and printed, which is handy in households where the computer doesn't normally sit between the fridge and the toaster.

The title also allows you to build up related shopping lists, which can be printed out and arranged to flow with the layout of your local supermarket. While Great Gourmet cannot begin to offer the comfort of your mum's old battered but cherished cooking bible, it is complementary and comprehensive.

"The cook was a good cook, as cooks go; and as good cooks go, she went." Saki (1904).

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 648

ACROSS
1 Intrude illegally (8)
5 Plug; arrest (4)
8 Induce, entice (8)
9 Sanctimonious Puritan (4)
11 *Traviata* composer (5)
12 Restrict, secure (3,4)
13 Calm and staid (6)
15 Sanctuary, refuge (6)
18 Provide funds for (7)
19 Prophet; to presage (5)
21 Dramatic stroke (4)
22 Shy though shame (8)
23 Trig. ratio: sounds like *notice* (4)
24 Fleet of small boats (8)

DOWN
1 Those that steal (7)
2 Young eel (5)
3 One insensitive to culture (10)
4 Military acknowledgement (6)
6 Disturbance (7)
7 Heathen (5)
10 If we are honest (4,4,2)
14 Fabled (Spanish) philanderer (3,4)
16 A strong painkiller (7)
17 Deadly (6)
18 Concentrate (on) (5)
20 Interrogate; cook (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 647
ACROSS: 1 Swap 4 Positive 8 Didactic 9 Talk 10 Blurb 11 Capstan 13 Gamely 15 Lining 18 Implore 20 Crumb 23 Bran 24 Guidance 25 Clarinet 26 Adam
DOWN: 2 Whirl 3 Prairie 4 Pith 5 Sociable 6 Titus 7 Villain 10 Bag 12 Hydrogen 14 Admiral 16 Nirvana 17 Gab 19 Lunar 21 Mecca 22 Riot

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THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No. 3335: A Sop To Cerberus by Teapoy

In the outside circle (48 letters), beginning at clue 1 and running clockwise, is a question to which solvers of The Listener would surely say "no!".

The third circle (12 letters) indicates the Adventure from which it is quoted and the central ring (3 letters) gives a clue to the author.

Except for three place names (which are in *Collins*) the answers to the clues are all words which appear in *Chambers* (1993). Before insertion in the grid, the five letters of each of these answers have to be jumbled appropriately.

No two words contain the same combination of letters.

CLUES (all 5 letters)

1 Serpent witch on a city motorway
2 Entertainers, sad to say, without money
3 Digital system used by "Nothumbrians"?
4 Swimmer needs a mixture of carbon fuel and hydrogen
5 Braidwork alien to serviceman
6 Blood English shed in Flodden mud
7 Stem scale of drink old man imbibes
8 Music just like the French put on before meals
9 With regard to the arrival at a place in the Netherlands
10 Conference centre backs on to station
11 With an internal decay diagnosis is bleak
12 Wood (Australian) is bowled, well back
13 Flaps when broadcasters turn up in middle of play
14 Cartesian symbol converted saint
15 Spenser taxes madmen
16 Crossing place no longer the fashion
17 Lining tin containing grass
18 Nominate a rather dull dark blue
19 Shelter with a lot of protection
20 In science fiction northern goddess provided support
21 Fall heavily, causing pain you might think
22 No longer bars sections about the Reformation
23 Sorrel starts spreading where Lorna was shot
24 Ventures intended to fascinate larks
25 Exotic inn on old railway route to the north?
26 Cat soldiers found on the way to Hastings perhaps
27 Jock's part makes a slight difference
28 Feels at least eight inches high
29 Material involving great effort
30 Rough Roman craft with very hard hull
31 The wagon man sees drink counsellors about
32 Empty store makes big noise
33 Sodium carbonate combined with acid, and a little bit over
34 It provides endless water supply after switching music on
35 A lot was blamed on her lack of protein synthesiser
36 Old galley now beginning to provide a bit of atmosphere
37 One of the Ashes series won by a run out
38 Cursed like master-at-arms, perhaps, in the Swedish navy
39 Improves microwaves but liable to botch about a quarter
40 Master, driven scatty doesn't need a reminder of school days
41 Turn right in a way
42 Produce exhausts say
43 Liger is now one steeped in tradition
44 Mallard producer eats duck all by himself
45 Annoyed about the way Major begins to be put out in Scotland
46 English emblem not worn regularly
47 Round about 1 to 5th of April, island was Renaissance centre
48 Open sesame entering part of every day language

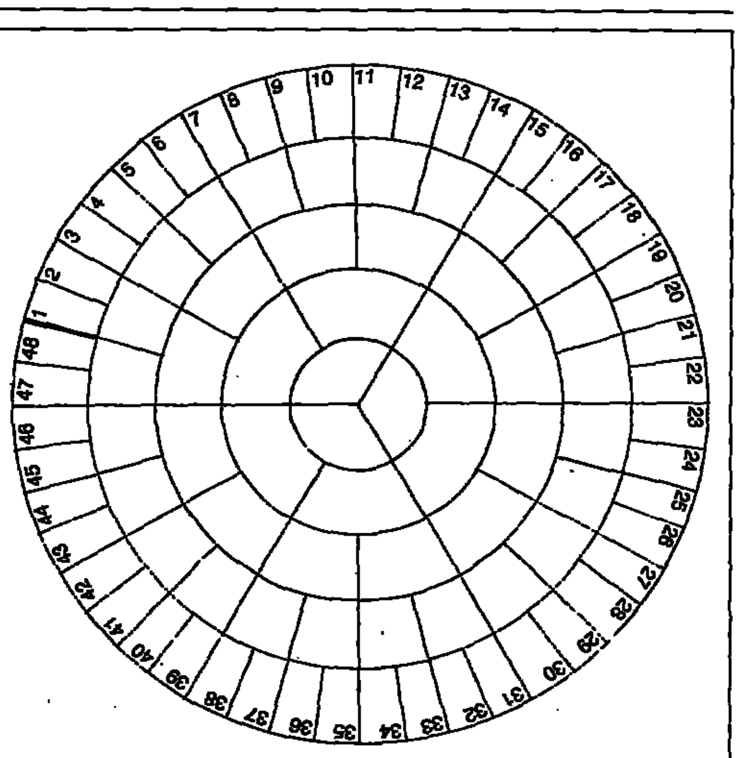
D	O	E	L	A	U	A	D	T	I	F	F
O	T	H	E	R	P	C	E	R	M	E	T
O	T	C	X	R	S	C	A	L	A	S	F
M	A	R	S	H	Y	R	D	E	B	T	N
E	W	A	E	D	B	U	B	B	L	E	D
D	A	N	C	E	S	E	A	T	E	R	M
B	L	O	T	C	H	Y	L	I	N	A	C
T	E	S	T	I	E	R	L	S	E	T	A
Q	T	A	R	S	A	F	O	S	S	A	S
C	T	L	F	I	L	E	U	O	S	B	H
G	R	I	E	V	E	E	S	T	P	E	A
B	E	S	T	E	R	F	K	S	A	K	W

Solution to No. 3332: Bad Lot by Duck
The extraneous letters spelt ALL WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY, set to music in *Messiah* by G. F. HANDEL — hence the Playfair square:

GFHAN
DELBC
IKMOP
QRSTU
VWXYZ

The puzzle features 12 *sheep* either missing from answers or encoded: 1A BIDENT, 15A MERINO (from sermonical), 30A TEG (from targets), 32A LAMB (from filmable), 35a EWE (from sweet pea), 37A WETHER, 3D YOW (from arrowy), 8D TUP (from imputableness), 10D ARGALI, 14D MUG (from cum grano salis), 23 AOUDAD, 31 RAM (from fee-farm)

The winner is Mr R. Newton of Sale, Cheshire. The runners-up are Mr G. S. Lessels of Parteen, Co Clare, and E. C. Hunt, of Norwich.



LISTENER CROSSWORD No. 3335

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